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COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 64
November 1998

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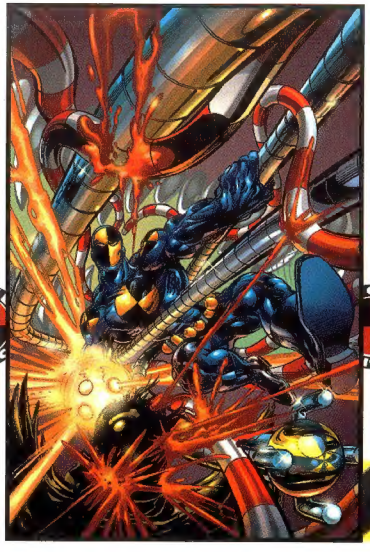

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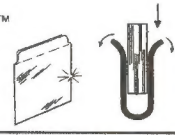

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950R	9 1/2 x 12 1/4	Sheet Music, Large Magazines	26.00	(52¢)	88	(44¢)	390	(39¢)
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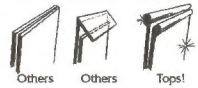

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725T	7 1/4 x 10 3/4	Standard Comics - 1970's-90's	20.75	(41¢)	68	(34¢)	295	(29¢)
775T	7 3/4 x 10 3/4	Silver/Gold Comics - 1950's-70's	21.50	(43¢)	71	(35¢)	305	(30¢)
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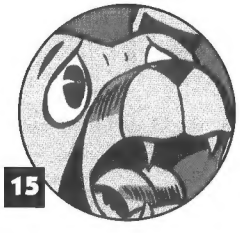

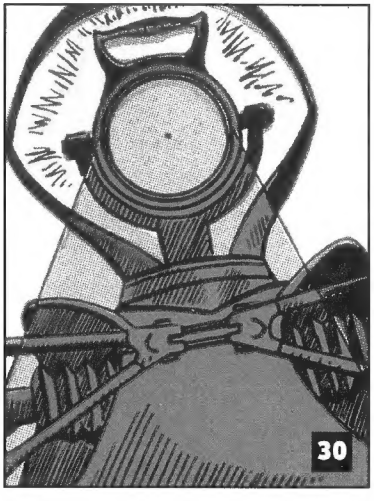

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A Golden Age of Fandom

I love fanzines… I've loved them since the day I first saw one back in 1965. My three-decade love affair with fanzines started when friend, and fellow collector Pat Calhoun told my brother Lane about a "fan magazine for comic book collectors" he'd read about in one of Julie Schwartz' letter columns. (Pat and Lane were 12 years old… I was 15.) One fateful day we sent in a whopping $1.25 for a four-issue, 3rd class sub and a few weeks later got a copy of *The Rocket's Blast and the Comicollector* (*RBCC*) #42 in the post (total postage… four 4¢ stamps). It wasn't the tracings of Bob Kane Batman drawings on the cover that first got my attention… it was the statement "CIRCULATION THIS ISSUE, A GUARANTEED 800 ! !"

I nearly fainted! I thought "800 comic book collectors out there? Are there really that many of us?" I'd lived in my own little collecting world for nearly seven years believing Pat, Lane and myself (along with less than a dozen collectors from Los Angeles) were the entire world of fandom. Now… suddenly… overnight… I was part of a movement that was 800 strong!

The shock of emerging from years of collector isolation was further compounded when I saw the ads! Page after page after page of not-so-neatly-typed ads that today would stop traffic!

The list of advertisers from *RBCC* #42 reads like a list of old friends to me: Raymond Miller, Richard Burgess, Larry Herndon, Bill Spicer, Collector's Book Store (Malcolm Willits and Leonard Brown), Russ Cochran (his first ad), Argosy Book Shop (hawking their newly-published *Comic Book Price Guide*), Phil Seuling, Dick Pryor, Jim "The Comic Reader" King, Cherokee Book Shop (Bert Blum), Rich Pujol, Howard Brenner and Jeff Gelb (selling their *Men Of Mystery* fanzine), Andrew Nadel (*11 pages* of old comics for sale!), Jerry Bond, Buddy Saunders, William Ostfeld (and his 1965 "10 Anniversary" ad), Vernan Watkins (a fellow San Diegan), John Barrett, Frank H. Nuessel, and last but not least, the legendary (and then high-priced) Howard Rogofsky!

And just to show you how high his prices were, here's a few selected odds and ends ("…complete and in good condition unless otherwise stated…") from Rogofsky's list to give you the flavor of what the "high end" of the marketplace looked like in 1965. The long list of Golden Age DCs on Howard's list included *Action* #3 $25; *All Star* #3 $60; *Batman* #40-43, 48, 49 $2.50@; *All American* #16 $50; *Comic Cavalcade* #1 $20; *Adventure* #15-21 $12@, 49-60 $8.50@, 61 $17.50; *Flash* #1 $75; *More Fun* #67 $20, 73 $25; *Superman* #3 $15, and *New York World's Fair* 1939 $35.

The lengthy Timelys included *Daring Mystery* #2, 4, 5 $12@; *Captain America* #1 $50, 52, 55-58, 60, 69-78 $4@; *Young Allies* #1 $15; *Human Torch* #2, 3, 4 $10@; and *Marvel Mystery* #7, 11 $12@. (The Fawcett, Fox, Quality, MLJ, EC, Hillman, and Fiction House in the list are equally amazing.)

So if anyone asks you why so many of us keep harping on the "The Golden Age of Fandom" tell them it's because it really was a Golden Age… when 800 devoted hobbyists could be brought together by a simple tome called a fanzine… full of wondrous discoveries in every issue. It was a Golden Age because almost anyone (even three kids from Coronado) could actually afford to collect what they loved to read.

May you fill the holes on your want list.

Gary

Gary M. Carter

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Excelsior!

Many thanks for sending me those copies of "Comic Book Marketplace" #61.

Even though I still think "Comic Book" should be one word ("Comicbook" see?) it was still a great issue—as they all are.

I feel that anyone with a genuine interest in the art and craft of comics can do no better than read CBM. It's beautifully edited (don't blush, Gary), with absorbing articles and compelling layouts.

By the way, I also enthusiastically applaud your choice of tribute subject for issue #61!

And hey, you owe me some money ! I like my CBM Life Achievement Award so much that I hadda go to the expense of buying a new little spotlight to shine on it. But don't worry, the spotlight didn't cost that much and I accept Visa or MasterCard.

To be serious for a moment, which isn't easy for me, congratulations on your great publication, Gary, and keep those issues coming!

Excelsior!

Stan Lee, California

CP 008

Wanted to pose a question that I thought the readers of CBM might be able to answer. I have several classic comic book cover prints laminated on fiberboard. They were done in the seventies by a company called Studio One, as part of a series of Classic American Covers. I have seen them occasionally at comic book shows. I have Action #1, Detective #27, Batman #1, and Flash #1. There must be at least eight in the set as Flash #1 is labeled CP 008 on the back. I wonder if any other readers know what other covers were done. I remain curious. Thanks!

Mike Jackson, via E-mail

Do they exist?

Have run into a dilemma that I hope my fellow CBM readers can help out with.

I recently purchased a copy of Crime Does Not Pay-Best of 1953. I corresponded with another collector about the "Best of" books; he said that he has seen only two others and they were both 1953 issues. Overstreet notes that there were five "Best of" issues published, but Gerber only lists three (none are pictured). I am wondering if issues other than the 1953 one exist.

Any help on this would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you and keep up the good work.

Jeff Luman, via E-mail

Now you've really got me curious, Jeff... I heard of the books you refer to, but have never actually seen one! Any chance you could make a color copy of your "Best Of..." cover and send it along for publication in CBM #65? I know our readers would love to see it! Please give me a call at your earliest convenience... (619) 437-1996.

More from Denis Kitchen

Sorry we only spoke for a brief moment at San Diego. The "other zoo" I like to call it.

I'm delighted that CBM is devoting a cover story to Will Eisner's classic Spirit women in isuue #66. I also noted that you printed my letter regarding the status of Spirit sections as bonafide comic books (CBM #63, page 8)and thought you might like a little more "history" on how the debate originally started.

I don't exactly remember the date and I apparently have no surviving correspondence on the matter, but I think it was about 10 years ago. Might have been 15. I had purchased the newest edition of Overstreet's Comic Book Price Guide and was reading the traditional front matter, including the section featuring the "Top 50 Titles" in terms of total guide value. I noticed that the original Spirit sections were not on the "Top 50" list, and it surprised me.

Being a curious and self-interested publisher of new incarnations of "The Spirit," I took that same edition of Overstreet and tediously added up the total value of a mint set of original newsprint "Spirit" sections. To my astonishment, it was a substantial amount. I no longer remember the total dollar value but, as I recall, it placed a "Spirit" mint set right behind a set of "Donald Duck," around 10th or 12th on the list. I felt I had caught a significant omission in Overstreet!

Proud of myself, I wrote Bob Overstreet with the information. Bob told me that he didn't personally compile the "Top 50" statistics. He

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referred me to contributor Robert Crestohl. I then called Crestohl with the same revelation. His first reaction was that he had never added up the value of a set of "The Spirit," which dumbfounded me. I assumed that an official statistician would have added the value of EVERY significant comic book run to determine a true "Top 50." I pointed out that "I" had just added up Overstreet's Spirit section numbers and they were very impressive. I invited him to check my arithmetic. I then said I assumed this error would be corrected in his tally in the next market report. I then was informed that "The Spirit" sections would NOT be listed in the next "Top 50"—— "because they were not REAL comic books." <(!!!)>

I understood then and now that a standard comic book has a slick enamel cover wrapped around its [then] customary newsprint interior. But there are many giveaway newsprint-only titles listed in Overstreet, as well as other non-traditional formats (such as the Leon & Cupples books, magazines, etc.) All are officially sanctioned by virtue of being listed in the bible of all comic book price guides. None of the other non-traditional formats, of course, had the long (twelve year) run of "The Spirit" and none had the cumulative value.

I pointed this out, noting that, to me, it was all the more remarkable that these fragile 8 or 16 page newsprint-only giveaway comic books should attain such collectible status and value. I argued that in the "spirit" of a comic book price guide analysis The Spirit sections should be given equal status to other series.

But it apparently fell on deaf ears.

At some point Overstreet stopped running the "Top 50" titles, I stopped paying attention, and the issue became moot. But I wonder if other CBM readers share my position on this.

When is a comic book a comic book?

Denis Kitchen, Massachusetts

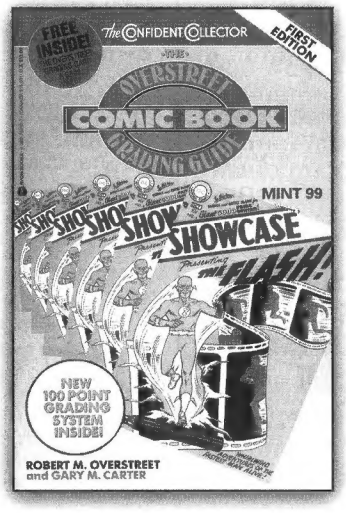
"Real" comic books

Must side with Denis Kitchen in his amazement that the Spirit sections are not considered "real" comic books. Does that also mean that individual issues from the famous March of Comics series are not "real" comic books... they were self cover (until 1952) too, a non-standard "size" and were distributed in shoe stores instead of at the newsstand. I wonder how fans feel?

Michael Naiman, California

The Overstreet® Comic Book Grading Guide

By Robert M. Overstreet & Gary M. Carter



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Where did Ditko say it?

As usual a most excellent issue. On page 49 Will Murray states that Steve Ditko has said in print that he created the Spider-Man costume. Where in print did Ditko say this? I'm sure I am not the only CBM reader who would love to read the full text where Ditko said this, or for that matter where Ditko has ever said anything. It has always been my understanding that Ditko does not give interviews or participate in comics in any way except creating them. If there exists some words from Ditko in print somewhere (other than the pages of a comic story) could you please inform your readers where we might peruse them?

Jim Brocius, via E-mail

Will is checking his research notes even as we speak and will report back next issue. I've seen several Ditko interviews in early fanzines and they were great! Also of note is Steve Ditko's recent letter he sent to our LOC in CBM #63 (see page 6). I would love to publish an interview with Mr. Ditko, primarily for historical reasons but also because I admire him personally and love his work! Perhaps it's a long shot, but maybe he'll consent to a CBM interview some day in the interest of documentation. For me, it would be a dream come true...

Hi Guys

Just a note of correction... I was rereading my letter that you published in CBM #61 and noticed an error. Thought I would correct it with you in case the error leads to questions. On page 14 the second complete sentence starts, "The first two volumes would have ...". The word "first" doesn't belong in the sentence. It gives the impression that more than two volumes were in the works whereas the ads I remembered stated it would be two volumes; nos. 5 & 6. I just thought I'd bring it to your attention in case it created some confusion.

I also noted that the ad on the back cover of #61 showed a different cover for #62 than was published. Too bad because I really liked the cover shown in the ad.

Looking forward to the Supe issue which will hopefully include the Wayne Boring feature you promised a while back. I hope you keep the cover shown in the ad (unless, of course, you do a cover I'd like even more).

To conclude, I've got to mention something you must have gotten used to hearing over and over and over again—you put out the most excellent, enlightening, informative, exciting, and beautiful looking piece of work on comics imaginable. Maybe we should all just say "ditto" to avoid having everyone use up space repeating the same thought constantly.

Keep it up, I'm with you for the long haul.

Alan Glick, via E-mail

Your correction is duly noted, Alan, as are your kind words of praise. The CBM #61 cover shown in the ad you refer to, is the promotional copy of #61 distributed at the 1998 SD Con. Thanks for your letter.

I wasn't excited

For the first time in my life I attended the San Diego Comic Con. I arrived on the last day, Sunday, after 12:00. I walked through the main entrance, turned left, and started strolling down the aisles and aisles of comic gems. The only person I really wanted to see was Gary Carter as I wanted him to sign my copies of Comic Book Marketplace #1-10 and #21.

Gary, it was certainly nice talking to you. I appreciate you taking the time to sign every one of my books and sharing your insight into our ever-changing hobby. I would also like to thank Mr. Pat S. Calhoun for signing a few of my books even though he was leaving. Thanks Pat.

No, the strange thing was... I wasn't excited.

Now, you have to understand; I have been collecting comics since 1973. And I don't mean buying them, putting them in pristine plastic bags wearing 100% white cotton gloves, and making sure the room temperature is just right as to preserve them as long as possible, or at least until I can get 10x Guide for these stocks... er... I mean, comics. No, I mean buying them, reading them, folding them up in my back pocket, reading them again before bed, and stacking them on top of each other in no particular order. I think I have a lot of key Bronze Age books that received that kind of loving treatment.

Because of my love for reading comics I majored in English in college, worked at ABC Television for eight years and now am pursuing a career as a screenwriter in Hollywood. So, I love comics with a passion that only other comic fanatics could understand, and yet...

I wasn't excited.

Meeting you, Gary, was wonderful, but the old me would have stayed at your booth the rest of the afternoon talking to you and your father

about comics and other hobby related issues. The new me talked a little bit, thanked you, and left. I stopped at a few other booths, browsed at some art, got a few company addresses, and... left. I left! I didn't spend any money... didn't buy... not one comic! I can't believe it! I didn't even walk the whole floor. I stopped at the middle where all the DC and Dark Horse displays and stuff were. I'm not exactly sure why I wasn't excited, but I've got a few theories:

The comic book business has become big business... and nothing more.

I choose to think of comics as something other than a for-profit business and therefore, refuse to play the comic business game. For me comics are escapism and pleasure, not another form of legal tender.

Life is getting in the way.

I'm in my 30s, have a wife who has a terrific business idea that will make us rich (don't all wives wish this), am on the verge of selling my first screenplay (don't all wanna-be-screenwriters say this), and have a 13-month-old daughter that keeps me on my toes... literally.

The writing is not as good.

Have you noticed how most music-videos seem to be sort of the same. I mean the singers all act alike, same intense facial expressions, same kinds of moves and stuff. Well, comic stories are like that, too. I just don't buy the stories anymore, I don't care what happens to the characters. It's a sort of a 'been there, done that' feeling. I don't know... am I just getting old or what?

Don't get me wrong... I still love comics. I read my Comic Book Marketplace every month from cover to cover. It's just that lately, that's all I'm reading on a regular basis.

There's a lot more I would like to say on this subject, but this letter is way too long as it is. There's also my thoughts on the mix of young and old and in-between I saw at the Con, the nice copies of rare(?) Golden Age books I saw at several booths, the mix of men and women, as well as the different ethic groups (or lack of) I witnessed. Oh, well, I guess that will have to wait until next year's Con... I'll be there.

Jeff Campbell, via E-mail

Batgirl premium?

Hi. This is just a short note to tell you how much I appreciate your publication and to ask a question. I recently came across a Batgirl cereal premium from 1981 called "Perfect Timing." It's eight pages long, colour, newsprint throughout, and measures 2" x 8 1/2". From the back page, it's obvious that it was distributed in General Foods/Post cereals. The copy I have is Canadian as the word balloons are in both English and French. What I'd like to know is: are there others in the series? Were they distributed in the US? Has anyone even heard of them? Thanks for you time, and again let me state how much I enjoy CBM each month.

Scott MacKenzie, via E-mail

Best of CBM?

My thanks and congratulations for your continued excellence has been long overdue. I've been meaning to write since reading the May issue (#59) of CBM.

I think this issue was one of your best from cover to cover. It was a prime example of how you mix in-depth feature articles with a variety of other shorts that cover the whole rainbow of comic book genres. We all have our special areas of collecting interest but in reading CBM, we as fans are always drawn to new horizons to explore. A prime example was the great pulp article by Dave Smith.

The contributions of Pat Calhoun and Michelle Nolan were as always top *(Continued on page 72)*

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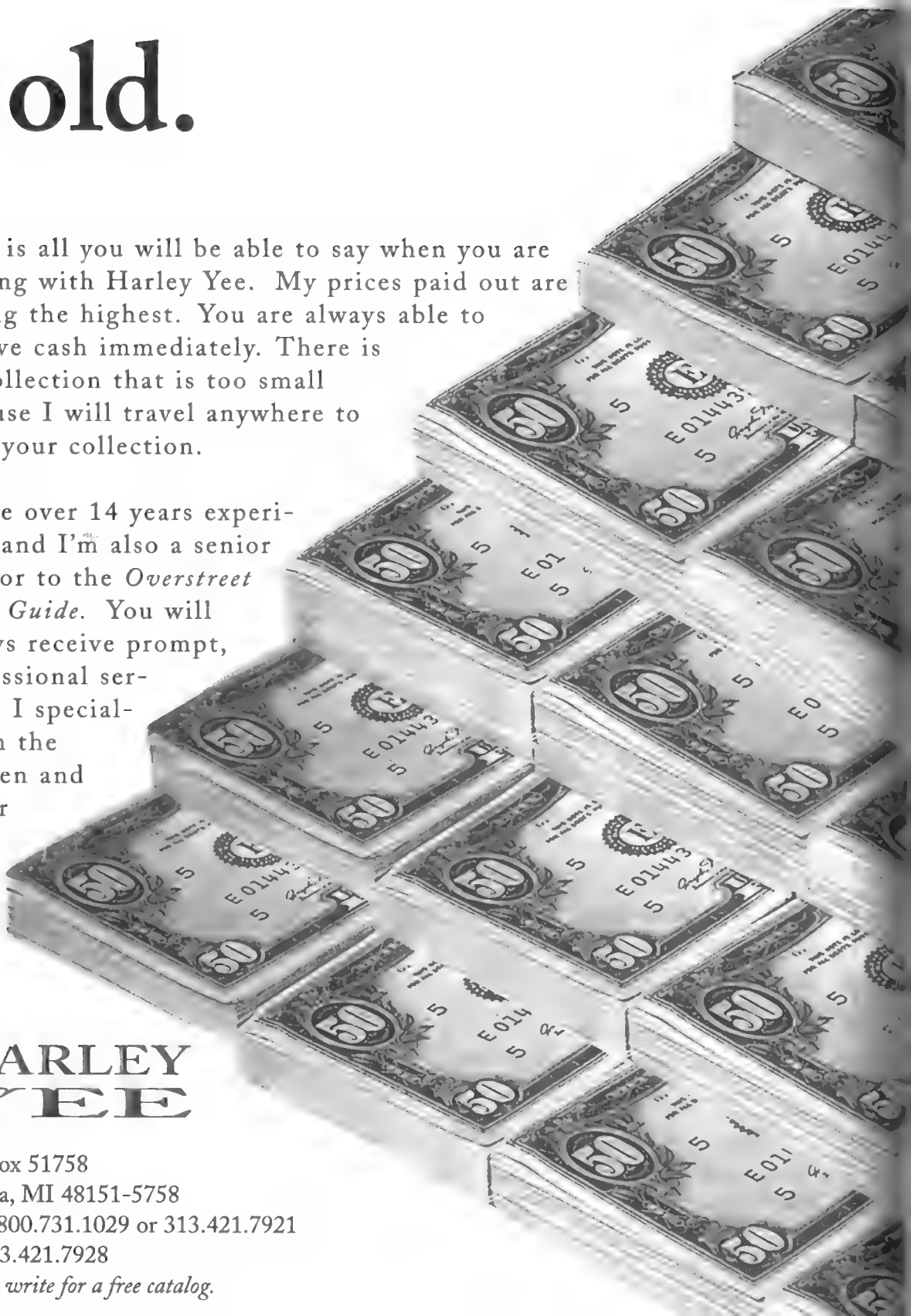

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By Pat S. Calhoun

Ace's Ace Artist... Lou Cameron!

Ace was one of the many companies to produce memorable fantasy comic books in the early 1950s, and their four titles—solid "pre-Code horror"—are most often collected by those intrigued by the work of Lou Cameron, an exceptional artist who did a lot of stories for Ace with an inventive and visually appealing style. Cameron's "Ace" work started appearing around 1952; the earlier unsigned art is often hard to identify surely—in many cases because of collaborations and "house style" homages. But by 1953 he was signing seven-page stories filled with clean high-impact art using a design approach that tied together the panels on the page.

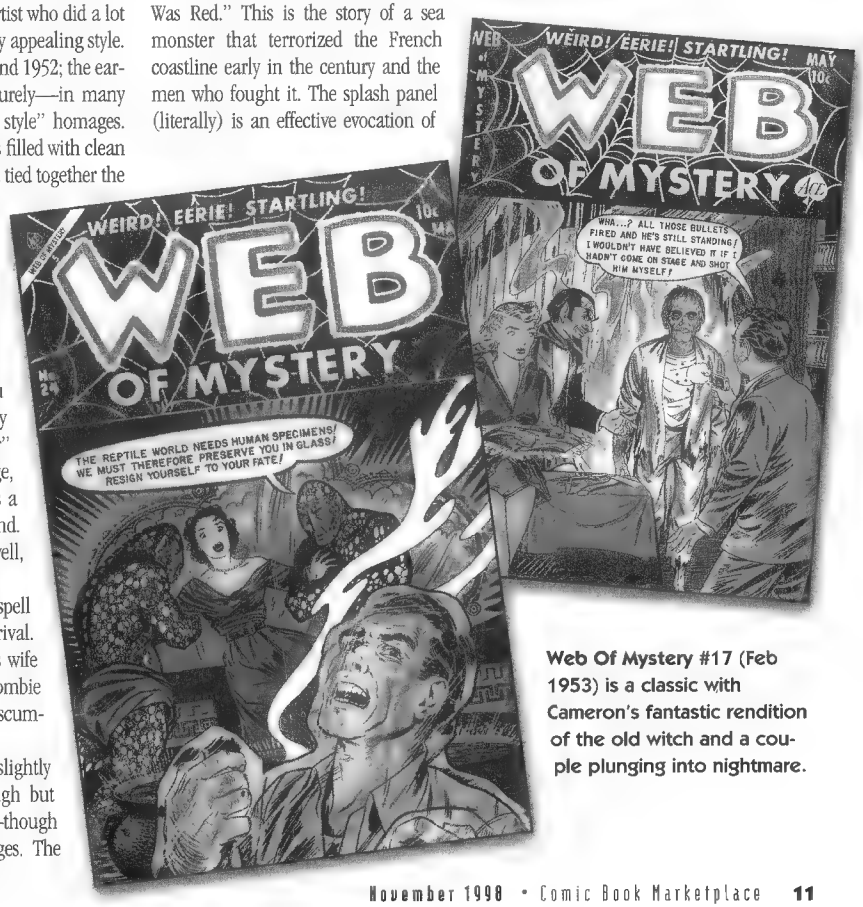
Baffling Mysteries, The Beyond, Hand Of Fate, and *Web Of Mystery* all featured their fair share of Lou's drawing; the three examples here all hail from *Web Of Mystery*, Ace's longest-running fantasy title.

Web Of Mystery #17 (February 1953) has that rare and wondrous thing—a Lou Cameron cover. The vivid carnival midway scene of the old witch in all her "bad hair" glory is an instantly accessible fantasy image, capable of making that quick connection as a buyer's eye swept across the crowded newsstand. Cameron illustrated the story inside as well, "From the Graves of the Unholy."

An ancient witch puts a woman under her spell because she needs a mortal to murder her rival. But the woman's husband fights to keep his wife from being used as a cat's paw. The witch's zombie helpers are particularly well-realized, their scumbled faces have a genuinely eerie look.

The other three stories in this issue are all slightly less than satisfying. They're readable enough but lack freshness or compulsion, and the art—though competent—lacks lurid and fantastic images. The first yarn, "Name From the Nether World" is kind of fun, being one of those "addressed to the Editor of *Web of Mystery*" things where the narrator tells a tale so wild it could only be published in a fantasy comic!

Web of Mystery #18 (May 1953), after an adequate if underwhelming cover, leads off with the Cameron-drawn "The Moon Was Red." This is the story of a sea monster that terrorized the French coastline early in the century and the men who fought it. The splash panel (literally) is an effective evocation of


WEIRD! EERIE! STARTLING!
WEB OF MYSTERY
THE REPTILE WORLD NEEDS HUMAN SPECIMENS! WE MUST THEREFORE PRESERVE YOU IN GLASS! RESIGN YOURSELF TO YOUR FATE!
WEIRD! EERIE! STARTLING!
WEB OF MYSTERY
WHA...? ALL THOSE BULLETS FIRED AND HE'S STILL STANDING! I WOULDN'T HAVE BELIEVED IT IF I HADN'T COME ON STAGE AND SHOT HIM MYSELF!

Web Of Mystery #17 (Feb 1953) is a classic with Cameron's fantastic rendition of the old witch and a couple plunging into nightmare.

A Chinese dragon borders the magnificent splash page of "Realm of Lost Faces" from Web Of Mystery #24 (May 1954). **See Cover page 11.**

the sea giant lifting a boat out of the water and sending the crew flying.

It's just an old "fish story," but Cameron imbues it with interest by providing detailed drawing, delicate patterning, and a strong sense of design. Fernande, the old Frenchman who kills the monster by bashing in its head with an axe, has an intriguing face—Cameron's grasp of character fleshes out the cast as distinct individuals.

REALM OF LOST FACES
MYSTERIOUS FORCES, WHICH HAVE EXISTED FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, STILL FORM POWERFUL INFLUENCES WHICH EVEN COMMUNIST CHINESE AND THEIR RUSSIAN COMRADES CANNOT EXPLAIN OR ERADICATE . . AS GREGORI IVANOVITCH, A SOVIET "ADVISER" TO THE CHINESE COMMUNIST ARMY, COULD PROBABLY TELL YOU! GREGORI ENCOUNTERED THE STRANGE CHINESE POWER DURING A VISIT TO THE SHOP OF WANG HSU!
MASTER! THE RUSSIAN WANTS THE MASK! I TOLD H M NO HANDS BUT YOURS HAVE TOUCHED IT! HE WILL NOT LISTEN!
THE MASK IS NOT FOR SALE, MY FRIEND...AND I BEG YOU— DO NOT PUT YOUR HANDS ON IT!
THE MASK S A SYMBOL THAT WE ARE DESCENDED FROM THE DRAGON GOD! IT HAS BEEN HANDED DOWN FROM FATHER TO SON FOR COUNTLESS CENTURIES! IT WATCHES OVER THE DESTINIES OF OUR FAMILY...AND YOU HAVE PROFANED IT!
PROFANED IT, HAVE I? IMPUDENT OLD FOOL!
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH MY HANDS, OLD MAN! MAYBE YOU SHOULD LEARN RESPECT FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS!

Cameron's version of the monster yarn "The Moon Was Red" from Web of Mystery #18 (May 1953).

Two other stories this issue are enjoyable, too. "Out of the Blackness They Come" has a scientist experimenting with colored lights that converge into a spot of ultimate blackness. But the black spot comes alive like a giant amoeba and drags the scientist to another dimension where he meets up with Satan. And "Evil Twangs the Devil's Harp" (whoever thought up Ace's story titles must have gotten paid by the word) has some nice effects in the art, enlivening the all-too-familiar tale of a magical instrument that brings ephemeral wealth and eternal woe.

The inside front cover is an ad for Ace's series of "double-novel" paperbacks that bound two novels together with covers that were in effect two front covers—one side for each novel. And the unique "flip" format gave both stories equal billing. Ace's line of science fiction doubles was the best SF paperback series of the 1950s.

Web Of Mystery #24 (May 1954) has a cover of "humdrum horror" that's typical of Ace, and starts inside with a pretty good yarn, "I Died Laughing," about a has-been comedian who plans one last big practical joke but ends up as the butt of it. It is the second story, though, that makes this a worthwhile book: "Realm of Lost Faces" is Cameron's masterpiece.

The tale itself is just fine, a Russian army brute kills the old Chinese owner of a beautiful dragon mask, but soon finds his own face disappearing after he wears it. There's even a great "I cannot speak... because I have no mouth!" scene. Cameron creates several full-page tableaus, with panels overlaid onto the background image, that can only be described as graphic storytelling genius.

The wrap-up weirdie, "My Sinister Double," is the usual scientific experiment gone awry that unleashes a psychic "Mr. Hyde," but it's got a certain gusto.

Cameron had done good art for Story's *Mysterious Adventures* in late 1951 and early 1952, and in 1953 and 1954 did occasional jobs for ACG and Atlas, but his many Ace stories are his supreme achievement. After Ace stopped publishing comics, Cameron did some work for Gilberton's *Classics Illustrated*. The art on those is not as detailed as his Ace efforts, perhaps due to low page rates. By 1958 Cameron was selling enough fiction to shift into a full-time career as a paperback writer, authoring western series novels and a few science fiction books.

One can only wonder what Cameron might have accomplished had not the Comics Code and slipping sales derailed the comic book industry. But, even more important is the work he did do, comic stories of mythic power and narrative drive—a visual feast of intense clarity—work pleasing enough to make highly collectible four Ace titles that would otherwise justifiably languish as second rate.

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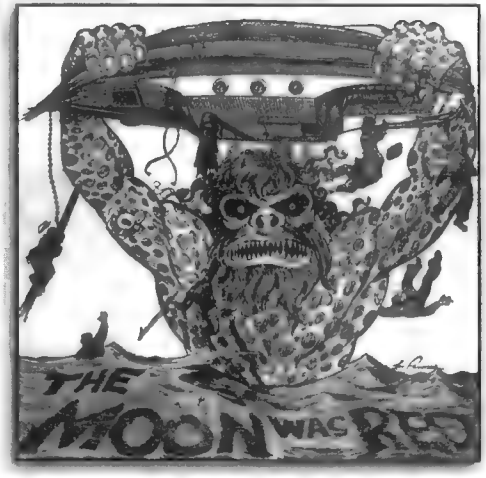

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OUR ARMY AT WAR	135	MASS COPY	FINE+	$15.00
OUR ARMY AT WAR	137	MASS COPY	FINE+	$15.00
OUR ARMY AT WAR	137	MASS COPY	VG+	$8.00
OUR ARMY AT WAR	146		VF+	$35.00
OUR ARMY AT WAR	148	MASS COPY	VF+	$75.00
OUR ARMY AT WAR	149	MASS COPY	VF/NM	$90.00
OUR ARMY AT WAR	150	MASS COPY	VF+	$75.00
OUR ARMY AT WAR	152	MASS COPY	VF/NM	$75.00
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OUR FIGHTING FORCES	20	GREY TONE	FVF	$75.00
OUR FIGHTING FORCES	29	CLASSIC COVER	VF+	$100.00
OUR FIGHTING FORCES	42	GREY TONE	FINE	$20.00
OUR FIGHTING FORCES	70		VF-	$20.00
OUR FIGHTING FORCES	72	SPARTA FILE COPY	NM	$40.00
OUR FIGHTING FORCES	73	SPARTA FILE COPY	VF/NM	$36.00
OUR FIGHTING FORCES	74	SPARTA FILE COPY	NM+	$44.00
OUR FIGHTING FORCES	93		VF+	$25.00
PHANTOM LADY	17		VF/NM	$6,000.00
POLICE ALL-FAMOUS CRIME	1	L.B. COLE	VF-	$75.00
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SEA DEVILS	08	GREY TONE	VF/VF+	$50.00
SEA DEVILS	21		NM	$50.00
SEA DEVILS	22	GREY TONE MASS CPY	NM/M	$75.00
SEA DEVILS	24	GREY TONE	NM	$50.00
SEVEN SEAS COMICS	02		FVF	$300.00
SEVEN SEAS COMICS	04	CLASSIC COVER	VF	$1,100.00
SGT. FURY	01		VF/NM	$1,500.00
SHOCKING MYSTERY CASES	53	L.B.COLE	VF/NM	$300.00
SPACE WESTERN	43	AVON FILE COPY	VF-	$195.00
SPACE WESTERN	44		VF-	$200.00
STARTLING	38	MILE HIGH COPY!	VF/NM	$750.00

Welcome...

Many of you know me, many of you don't. Professionally, I've been a commercial artist for the last 20 years and I've built a very successful business in that time. I want to use the principals I've learned in business to be successful in collectibles.

The most important of these is customer service. Secondly, giving the client good value for their money. I promise accurate grading (I've sat on two grading committees for Christie's) and fast shipment. I also guarantee your satisfaction.

I'm actively seeking material to buy. I'm also buying original cover art, DC grey tones, and high grade Wonder Woman for my personal collection.

Thanks,
Ed Jaster

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1.312.944.4200 Days e-mail: comics@ais.net

By Michelle Nolan

Years before the Doom Patrol there was another... Robotman!

Robotman remains one of the best-kept secrets in comics. He appeared in 140 DC Comics stories from April 1942 through December 1953, missing only one month in that span. He lasted longer than the original Flash, Green Lantern, Hawkman, Atom, Dr. Midnight and Black Canary, to name only a few of the better-known heroes of the Golden Age!

Yet, if it weren't for his appearances in the *All-Star Squadron* series of the 1980s, Robotman would have been one of the ultimate forgotten heroes. In many ways, he still is.

It isn't cheap, either, to enjoy Robotman's Golden Age adventures. To the best of my knowledge, only six ever have been reprinted.

Robotman originally appeared in *Star Spangled Comics* #7 (April 1942) through #82 (July 1948) before moving over to *Detective Comics* with #138 (August 1948) through #202 (December 1953). The only month he ever missed was in *Detective* #155 (January 1950). (He also appeared in a reprint story in the second *Daisy Rifle Handbook* giveaway comic in 1948.)

Yet not a single one of those issues is listed for less that $40 even in GD condition in the *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide*.

That may be why Robotman has been given so little attention in books and fanzines over the years. However, he deserves better than he has received, so that's why when Ye Editor asked for a column on Robotman, I was more than happy to clank, er, crank one out. (And you thought you might escape this time without a pun!)

In short, Robotman is a ton of fun... and this just may be the most attention Robotman has ever received in fandom to date. There was a decent entry in Jeff Rovin's *Encyclopedia of Super Heroes*, but Robotman merited only one paragraph in the recent coffee table book on DC Comics by Les Daniels. In fact, in most references on comics, you won't find anything at all about the Man of Metal.

As Robotman announces in his second adventure in *Star Spangled* #8 (May 1942), "I'm not Superman!"

It should be noted (or I'll get letters from Silver Age fans) that a second version of Robotman debuted in 1963 as part of the Doom Patrol in *My Greatest Adventure* #80, but this later version of Robotman never had his own strip. In this second incarnation of Robotman, the human aspects of the dilemma of a human brain trapped in a robot body were heavily explored after being almost entirely ignored during Robotman's Golden Age days.

I NEVER SAW ANYONE LIKE HIM BEFORE, ROBOT-MAN! WHY, HE COULD BOUNCE, TWIST, STRETCH--
YES, HE'S A REAL RUBBERMAN! COME ON, LET'S SEE IF WE CAN GET ON HIS TRAIL AGAIN!

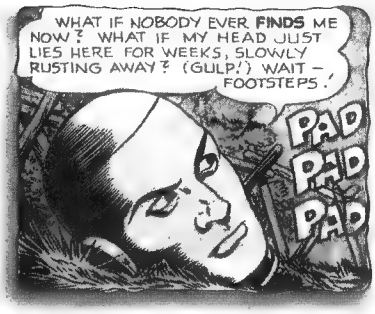
Robotman and Robot Dog discuss the amazing powers of the Rubberman from Star Spangled #77 (Sep 1949).

Even though Robotman remains to this day one of the wittiest strips ever presented in comics, DC twice replaced his with the much more pedestrian Captain Compass—in *Star Spangled* #83 and in *Detective* #203!

Robotman, originally conceived by Superman creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, was drawn for most of his career in car-

toony style by a polished veteran, Jimmy Thompson. (If you want to see how cartoony, check page 91 of the Daniels book.)

From *Star Spangled* #29 through #80, Robotman also had a unique companion—the talking Robbie the Robot Dog.


WHAT IF NOBODY EVER FINDS ME NOW? WHAT IF MY HEAD JUST LIES HERE FOR WEEKS, SLOWLY RUSTING AWAY? (GULP!) WAIT — FOOTSTEPS!
PAD PAD PAD

A rare look at the Robotman story from the Daisy Handbook #2 (1948). The obscure collectible also featured Capt. Marvel and Boy Commandos by Simon & Kirby.

Green Lantern's pet dog Streak or Rex the Wonder Dog he wasn't! Robbie is also why most of the *Star Spangled* stories were pretty much ignored by the original wave of Golden Age collectors—it's pretty difficult to suspend your belief in a character like Robotman, but it's nearly impossible to accept a talking robot dog!

Many of the Robbie stories are full of wonderful whimsy and repartee. Even so, the concept doesn't work with many of today's collectors, in much the same way that they have a hard time accepting Johnny Thunder's Thunderbolt or Green Lantern's Doiby Dickles.

After a marvelously tongue-in-cheek story in *Star Spangled* #80 (May 1948) entitled "The Bandits and the Biscuits," Robbie vanished forever. There was no reason ever given… no story device ever used. (To this day, I still wonder why Robbie wound up in the DC editors' doghouse!)

Of course, *Star Spangled Comics* always had a lighter touch than *Detective Comics*, so apparently Robbie (or at least his dog disguise) was about to become so much dog meat, leaving Robotman to crusade alone.

Robotman was, as far as I can determine, a truly original Golden Age comic book character. Of course, the idea of keeping a human brain alive outside the body—or inside something or someone else—long has been a staple of science fiction and horror stories and films. But, to the best of my knowledge, Robotman was the first character of this sort in the comics, following in the wake of the Adam Link pulp stories by the Binder brothers.

As detailed in Robotman's origin story, the brain of Dr. Robert Crane is placed inside a metal body of his own invention after he is killed by criminals. Adapting the human disguise of Paul Dennis, Robotman embarks on a unique crime-crushing career.

Robotman enjoyed a wide variety of powers—there was no real consistency in these over the course of his long career—and he could be taken apart (or blown up or sawed up) and put back together. This happened many times and formed the basis for many a witty story.

In short, Robotman was unique but the stories were almost entirely plot driven. After a few early references, any angst that Paul Dennis felt over having an artificial human body was seldom dealt with, unlike the Cliff Steele character in the Doom Patrol.

ROBOTMAN
ROBOTMAN IS AS TOUGH AS TEMPERED STEEL AND PACKS A POWERFUL PUNCH! BUT SOME THINGS HE CANNOT DO --THINGS THAT THE ORDINARY MAN FINDS SIMPLE! FOR INSTANCE, HE CAN'T ESCAPE DISCOVERY BY A TRIO WITH TAKING WAYS--AND THEY ALMOST GIVE HIM THE HORSE LAUGH AS THEY SPOT HIM WITH... "THE ROBOTMAN DETECTOR!"
COPR. 1947, NATL. COMICS PUB., INC.
AT A DUDE RANCH, PAUL DENNIS, ALIAS ROBOTMAN, RUNS INTO AN EMBARRASSING MOMENT---
GO ON, PAUL --RIDE HIM!
I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D BE AFRAID OF A HORSE!
ER--I'M NOT--

IT'S JUST THAT I CAN'T HANDLE A HORSE...WITH OTHER PEOPLE AROUND--
HA! HA! WHAT A SILLY EXCUSE! COME, ALGERNON, LET'S GO WITHOUT HIM!
YOU SURELY LOOKED SCARED, ROBOTMAN!
I WAS, ROBBIE! MY METAL BODY IS TOO HEAVY FOR THAT HORSE TO CARRY! BUT TO TELL THEM WOULD REVEAL MY IDENTITY AS ROBOTMAN!
BUT I WILL MAKE THEM THINK I CAN RIDE! FIRST, I TAKE OFF MY PLASTIC DISGUISE--
NOW I'LL TAKE THE SHORT-CUT--AND BEAT THEM TO THE PLACE THEY'RE GOING!
VERY CLEVER!
THIS WOULD OPEN THEIR EYES--IF THEY COULD SEE IT!
PRESENTLY...
HERE WE ARE...NOW TO PUT ON MY PLASTIC DISGUISE AGAIN! THEY'LL THINK I RODE HERE!
PUFF PUFF
I SAVED A LOT OF TIME BY THAT SHORT-CUT--I'LL REST TILL THEY GET HERE!
GOOD IDEA! I CAN USE A NAP!
12

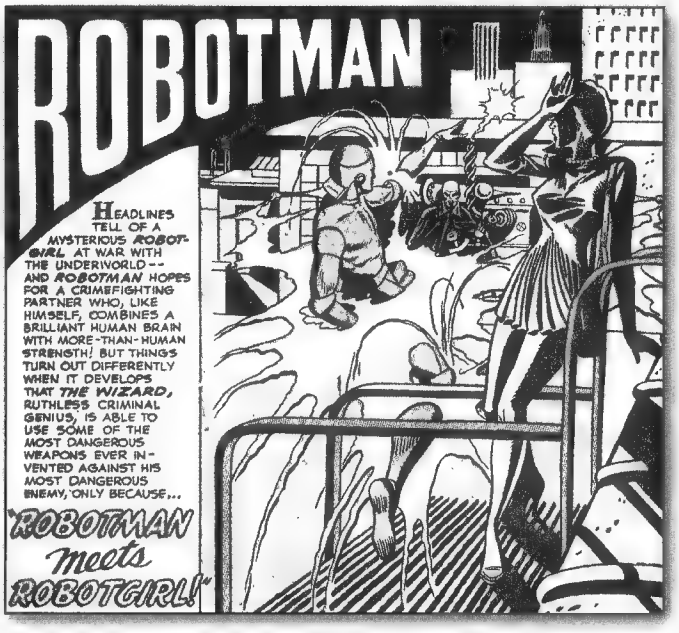
By the way, unlike the Doom Patrol's Robotman, the original version of Robotman was never part of a superhero team in Golden Age comics. But then, neither was Johnny Quick, who lasted nearly a year longer than Robotman as a backup after being introduced by DC eight months earlier in *More Fun* #71 (September 1941. However, unlike Robotman, Johnny Quick appeared on a few covers of *More Fun* before shifting over for a long run in *Adventure Comics*).

Robotman's origin story covered 13 pages in *Star Spangled* #7, but the count was dropped to 10 pages for #8 through 20 and to 8 pages for #21. He never again was in the story longer than seven pages.

Even so, there were plenty of clever tales of Robotman, especially in *Detective Comics* after the character took a less tongue-in-cheek turn.

It's interesting to note that when Robotman switched to *Detective* with issue #138, there was no plug for this on the cover. Yet when Pow-Wow Smith, the Indian Lawman, appeared in *Detective Comics,* every one of his appearances was hyped at the top of the cover from his first in #151 through #200 (October 1953) before he moved over to *Western Comics* following his last appearance in *Detective* with #202 (December 1953). That issue also marked the final appearance of Robotman, who had nowhere to go.

Some of Robotman's adventures were reasonably logical, but others were sheer fantasy. For a good example of the latter, the cleverly titled "Robotman in the Moon" in *Detective* #141 (November 1948) is a prime example.


ROBOTMAN
HEADLINES TELL OF A MYSTERIOUS ROBOT-GIRL AT WAR WITH THE UNDERWORLD -- AND ROBOTMAN HOPES FOR A CRIMEFIGHTING PARTNER WHO, LIKE HIMSELF, COMBINES A BRILLIANT HUMAN BRAIN WITH MORE-THAN-HUMAN STRENGTH! BUT THINGS TURN OUT DIFFERENTLY WHEN IT DEVELOPS THAT THE WIZARD, RUTHLESS CRIMINAL GENIUS, IS ABLE TO USE SOME OF THE MOST DANGEROUS WEAPONS EVER INVENTED AGAINST HIS MOST DANGEROUS ENEMY, ONLY BECAUSE...
"ROBOTMAN Meets ROBOTGIRL!"

Every man (and robot) must have his mate... and Robotman is no exception!

In this story, Robotman is unwittingly sent on a one-way rocket to the moon. However, he figures that because the moon's gravity is one-sixth of that of earth, he can work up enough speed to leap off the moon and coast back to Earth. The

BUT AS THE METAL PAIR RELAX, SINISTER VISITORS APPROACH!
BOY'S, IT WAS A LUCKY BREAK FOR US, GETTING HOLD OF THAT SURPLUS WAR MATERIAL!
IT SURE WAS, SHARP!
ESPECIALLY THIS ARMY MINE-DETECTOR! IT SURE IS A WHIZ AT SPOTTING METAL!
POOR BLINKY!
YEAH, BLINKY ROBS A JEWELRY STORE, GETS SENT TO JAIL--AFTER BURYING THE GOLD AND SILVER AROUND HERE!
WAIT TILL HE GETS OUT--AND LEARNS THAT WE FOUND HIS SWAG WITH THIS MINE DETECTOR!
SO THE SEARCH BEGINS.
IT'S BEGINNIN' TO BUZZ--THERE'S METAL AROUND!
GET THAT SHOVEL AWAY--IT'S METAL!
WE'RE GETTING CLOSE--IT BUZZES LOUDER AS WE GET NEARER TO THAT TREE--
UNAWARE THAT ROBOTMAN'S METAL BODY CAUSES THE BUZZING, THE CROOKS CLOSE IN.
THE SWAG MUST BE UNDER THAT GUY!
SWAG!
HM-M--I'LL PRETEND I'M ASLEEP!
3

3

WE DON'T WANT TO DISTURB YOUR NAP, SAP! SO, HERE--
AAAA
SO THEY THINK THAT KAYOES ME, DO THEY?
SOCK
OUT OF OUR WAY--WE GOT DIGGIN' TO DO!
GOOD! I'LL ROLL OUT OF SIGHT--
ROBOTMAN! I WAS ASLEEP--
THEY THOUGHT I WAS, TOO! OFF WITH THE DISGUISE, ROBBIE--WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO!
SECONDS LATER...
HELLO, RATS--DIGGING A RAT HOLE?
ROBOTMAN
SHOVE OFF, ROBOTMAN! YOU'RE NOT WANTED!
SAVE YOUR STRENGTH--I'VE GOT AN IRON SKULL AND--
--AN IRON FIST!
SOCK!
YIIII, AM I IN A HOLE!

4

fact that his brain would have been first frozen by the cold of space, then fried by the friction of re-entry, is never dealt with.

In this story, Robotman also mutters "I'll rust or go mad" if he has to stay on the moon. Without oxidation, of course, rust would be impossible. This kind of mistake would never have been tolerated a decade or two later, but this was long before DC ran regular letters columns.

In one of my favorite Robotman stories, in *Detective* #145 (March 1949), he is poorly repaired by an auto mechanic named Joe Bloe after falling off a cliff while pursuing criminals. "I can be repaired like any machine!" Robotman says. "I think I can crawl to the next town and find a garage."

Upon encountering Joe Bloe, the crawling Robotman greets him with "Hello! I need repairs!" After a few panels of mishaps following the repairs, Robotman is relieved to find that Joe Bloe has also done a poor job of repairing the crooks' car, which blows up.

Several of the plots were thinly recycled. For example, the stories in *Detective* #150 and #163 were entitled "Robotman Meets Robotcrook" and "Robotman Meets Robot Robber," respectively.

The story in *Detective* #151 (September 1949) is strange, to say the least. "Around the World in 24 hours" tells the tale of how an atomic-powered device leads Robotman on an uncontrolled run around the world. At last he realizes, "I've got to take a chance and smash my body, and the atomotor, against that boulder! If I'm lucky, my head will roll free, undamaged!" It works, only to make Robotman realize that his head might not be found! Fortunately, though, a farmer comes across it and his head is sent to his mechanic, to be rejoined with a new body.

Can you imagine how weird this must have seemed, even to a 10-year-old reader? It's no wonder that, except for the origin recap story from *Detective* #138 (reprinted in *World's Finest* #208, December 1971), the only other Robotman stories reprinted from *Detective* were later, more serious tales from #176 (reprinted in *World's Finest* #168, August 1967), #178 (reprinted in *Adventure* #413, December 1971), *Detective* #194 (reprinted in *World's Finest* #226, December 1974) and #197 (reprinted in *World's Finest* #223, June 1974). These are all amusing reading.

In addition, DC's *Greatest Golden Age Stories Ever Told* book reprinted the story from *Star Spangled* #77 (February 1948)—"Robotman vs. Rubberman." This ironic tale predates DC's purchase of Plastic Man (and, indeed, borrows the idea of Quality's Plastic Man, who was still going very strong in 1948).

I've always enjoyed the DC stories of the 1950s in which an original (albeit usually one-shot) costumed character makes an appearance. Such a tale is "Robotman Meets Robotgirl" in *Detective* #177 (November 1951).

FACING PAGE:
After discovering the ruins of an ancient civilization wiped out by atomic bombs (Detective #141, Nov 1948), Robotman escapes the Moon's gravitational field and coasts back to Earth.

UNEXPECTEDLY
THIS IS THE WAY TO HANDLE ROBOTMAN, BOYS!
SMART, TOO! WITH SAND IN MY METAL JOINTS I CAN HARDLY MOVE!
THAT'S DIRTY FIGHTING.
SLOWLY, AIDED BY ROBBIE, THE MAN OF METAL REMOVES THE SAND. THEN....
IF THOSE THUGS THINK THEY CAN HIDE IN THESE TREES, THEY'RE MISTAKEN! I'LL FIND THEM WITH THE HELP OF THIS HORSE!
AFTER THEM, PAL! I'LL FOLLOW YOU AT A DISTANCE SO MY METAL WON'T SET OFF THE MINE DETECTOR!
SOON...
THAT THING'S SOUNDING OFF AGAIN—THERE MUST BE METAL....
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
YEAH—OUR GUNS! WE'RE BEING DETECTED!
AS THE MINE-DETECTOR BUZZES, REVEALING THE CROOKS HIDING PLACE, ROBOTMAN CLOSES IN.....
THEY SET FIRE TO THE WOODS!
WE'VE GOT TO PUT IT OUT BEFORE IT SPREADS!
5

LET ME SHOW YOU HOW TO BEAT OUT A FIRE, ROBBIE--
THIS IS FASTER THAN BEATING IT OUT WITH A SHOVEL!
MEANWHILE...
ONCE ACROSS THIS ROPE BRIDGE, WE'RE SAFE!
YEAH, ROBOTMAN'S TOO HEAVY TO CROSS THIS BRIDGE!
SNAP!
I DON'T HAVE TO FOLLOW, RATS--I CAN CATCH YOU THIS WAY!
AFTER THE THUGS ARE HANDED OVER TO THE POLICE....
THE DETECTOR'S BUZZING AGAIN--THE LOOT MUST BE IN THAT HOLLOW TREE STUMP!
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
LATER...
IT WAS A LONG RIDE--WHY, DENNIS IS HERE ALREADY! HE CAN HANDLE A HORSE AFTER ALL!
AND HOW!
THE END
6

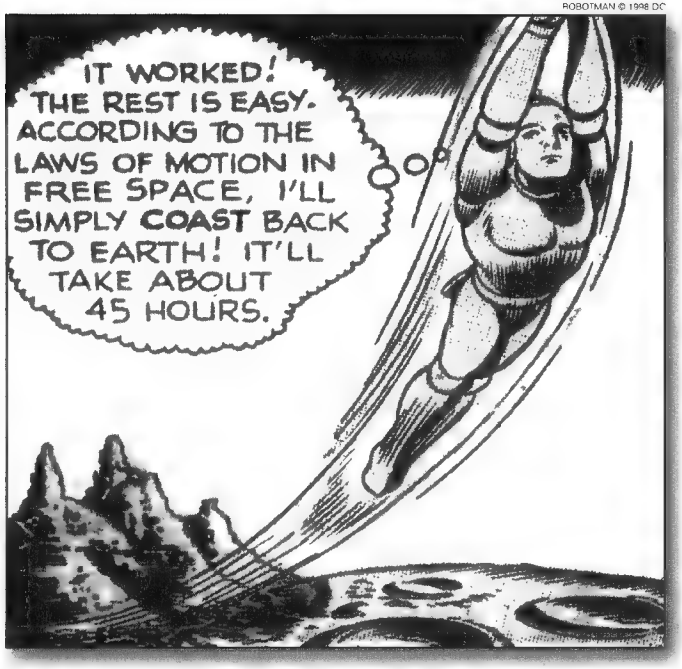
By the way, the 3 1/2 page, 20-panel Robotman story in *Detective* #178 (December 1951), "The Robot Ghost," is one of the shortest superhero tales in DC history. Believe it or not, it's a fully developed story. This was the period in which DC dropped most of its comics from 52 pages in late 1951 to either 44 or 36 (counting the covers), and several backup characters found their adventures permanently "downsized."

If you can find a reading copy of *World's Finest* #223 (worth about a buck), you'll be able to enjoy one of the best of all Robotman stories—"License For a Robot!" In this little six-page fantasy, an old law finds Robotman unable to function without a license. It's sheer fun, and darned good storytelling, too.

In fact, it's stories like this that make me realize how much I love the old comics. I don't mind a story continued over one or two issues, but I generally prefer a self-contained story, whether it's a six-pager or a three-part epic in the same issue.

Joe Certa, who spent many years drawing the Martian Manhunter after he was introduced in *Detective* #225 (November 1955), did the last couple of years of Robotman. Maybe it's just a coincidence, but I guess Certa liked doing characters with false human fronts.

So keep an eye out for those defective old issues of *Detective*. You might find yourself reading about Robotman without shelling out a lot of metal!


ROBOTMAN © 1998 DC
IT WORKED! THE REST IS EASY. ACCORDING TO THE LAWS OF MOTION IN FREE SPACE, I'LL SIMPLY COAST BACK TO EARTH! IT'LL TAKE ABOUT 45 HOURS.

Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from the '40s through the '60s. In real life, Michelle works as a freelance journalist.

CBM CHECKLIST

Robotman Stories in Detective Comics

KEY: Story Title (Detective Comics Issue No, Month/Year, Story Page Count) & Notes where applicable

- Inside Story of Robotman (#138, Aug 1948, 6 pgs.) recaps origin
- A Bid for Robotman (#139, Sep 1948, 6 pgs.)
- Robotman's Double Trouble (#140, Oct 1948, 6 pgs.)
- Robotman In the Moon (#141, Nov 1948, 6 pgs.)
- The Robot Bandit (#142, Dec 1948, 6 pgs.)
- Robotman vs. the Baffler (#143, Jan 1949, 6 pgs)
- The Human Armored Car (#144, Feb 1949, 6 pgs.)
- The Smash-Up Crimes (#145, Mar 1949, 6 pgs.)
- The Candid Camera Pest (#146, Apr 1949, 6 pgs.)
- Robot Town, U.S.A. (#147, May 1949, 6 pgs.)
- The Metal Man's Sports-A-Thon (#148, Jun 1949, 6 pgs.)
- The Lost Evidence (#149, Jul 1949, 6 pgs.)
- Robotman Meets Robotcrook (#150, Aug 1949, 6 pgs.)
- Around the World in 24 Hrs (#151, Sep 1949, 6 pgs)
- Robotbody Meets A Body (#152, Oct 1949, 6 pgs.)
- The Second Robotman (#153, Nov 1949, 6 pgs.)
- Robotman, Mind Reader (#154, Dec 1949, 6 pgs.)
- To Arms! (#156, Feb 1950, 6 pgs.)
- Pounds of Peril! (#157, Mar 1950, 6 pgs.)
- Feloney and Fun (#158, Apr 1950, 6 pgs.)
- The Strongest Scoundrel on Earth! (#159, May 1950, 6 pgs.)
- The Renegade Robot! (#160, Jun 1950, 6 pgs)
- Diamond Key to Doom! (#161, Jul 1950, 6 pgs.)
- The Disjointed Robotman (#162, Aug 1950, 6 pgs.)
- Robotman Meets Robotrobber (#163, Sep 1950, 6 pgs.)
- The Robot-Mobile (#164, Oct 1950, 6 pgs.)
- One-Man Fire Department! (#165, Nov 1950, 6 pgs.)
- Title?? (#166, Dec 1950, 6 pgs.)
- The Captured Brain (#167, Jan 1951, 6 pgs.)
- Return of the Iron Man (#168, Feb 1951, 6 pgs.)
- Robotman, Actor! (#169, Mar 1951, 6 pgs.)
- The Racing Robot Car (#170, Apr 1951, 6 pgs.)
- The Powerless Robot! (#171, May 1951, 6 pgs.)
- Three Clues to Crime (#172, Jun 1951, 6 pgs)
- The Terrible Toys of Dr. Morro! (#173, Jul 1951, 6 pgs.)
- The Strange Bodies of Robotman (#174, Aug 1951, 6 pgs.)
- The Boy Who Re-Made Robotman! (#175, Sep 1951, 6 pgs.)
- The Testing of Robotman! (#176, Oct 1951, 6 pgs.)

(Continued on page 77)

Star Detective Magazine is a pretty rare Red Circle pulp, and the March, 1937 issue, cover-featuring N. V. Romero's crime-busting novel, "The X-Man," is probably the rarest issue of all. The cover shows a gunman in traditional business gray returning fire while a trussed and gagged blonde in red cowers at his feet. He wears no costume, hides behind no mask. He's Daniel "Dash" Antonio, Special Investigator for the District Attorney of La Plaza, Texas. And he's on the trail of the gangsters who pushed the mayor off a roof.

Dash's investigation brings him into contact with the local mob and as the bodies pile up, Antonio begins taking heat from the press. Which leads to this exchange between D. A. John Gregg and Dash over Dash's nightclubbing investigation:

"Chief, I don't think—at least I didn't a while ago—that because I'm working for this State of Texas, I'm supposed to go about in sackcloth and ashes. But then, it's easy to explain this editorial."

"How?"

"The little fella. The guy that has to bear it on his broad shoulders. The persecuted, erstwhile forgotten man. Dash Antonio. I'm on the spot. Instead of being a G-Man, I'm an X-Man. Dash Antonio, X-Man. Mind if I have hysterics on your shoulder, chief?"

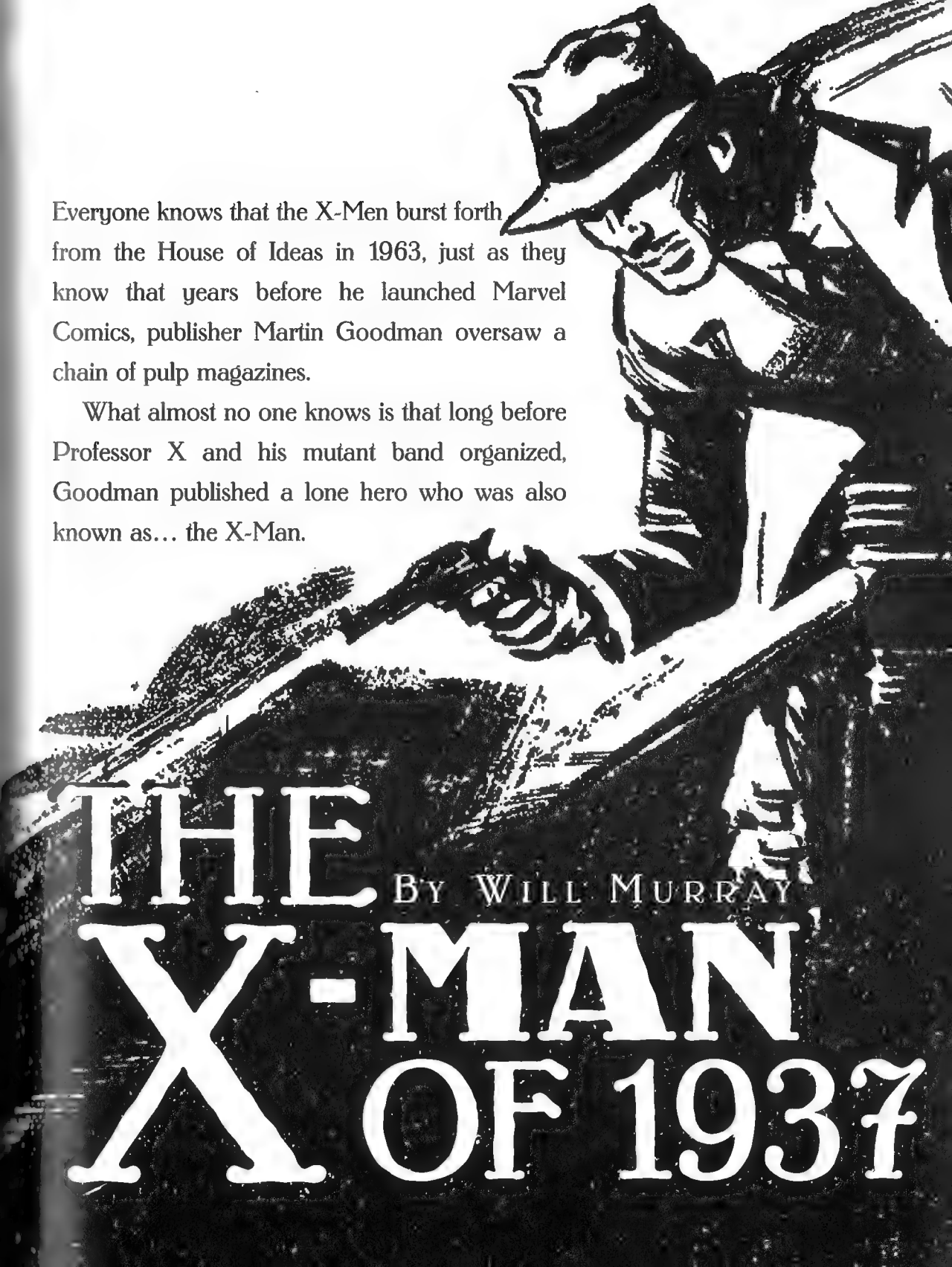
Dash is your basic 1930's hardboiled dick. He's not really a G-Man, but he must have admired them because he continually refers to himself as an X-Man throughout the novel. Dash narrates his own story in classic style, so you don't get much of a sense of him beyond what others say. His deadpan expression and black eyes give felons the creeps. His sixth sense is legendary. He's death with an automatic. He takes a few bullets, too. At the climax, when Dash chases the main hood onto the roof of a building, trading shots all the way, he's riddled with lead, suffering massive blood loss, and considers himself virtually dead: "I felt like a ghost. I knew I was dead... My feet did not touch the floor now. I was floating."

But dauntless Dash refuses to lie down and die:

"He shot. The flame made pretty patterns in the night. Good shot, too: got me in the leg. I felt a little prickle. It almost made me laugh. I had to keep going. Going.

Lights like a lightning bugs all over our fair city. I got to him. He was trying to crawl to the next building. Trying to swing on a rope. He was coming back on the roof, and was jumping on me and clawing at my throat. Clawing. Snarling. I had to laugh. How I laughed. And eventually I fought back. I was a ghost in Space-Time. I was a mere

Martin Goodman's original "X-Man" shoots it out with the mob in the scarce March, 1937 issue of Star Detective Magazine.



Everyone knows that the X-Men burst forth from the House of Ideas in 1963, just as they know that years before he launched Marvel Comics, publisher Martin Goodman oversaw a chain of pulp magazines.

What almost no one knows is that long before Professor X and his mutant band organized, Goodman published a lone hero who was also known as… the X-Man.

THE X-MAN OF 1937

By Will Murray

brain, thinking of how that fellow would choke me to death, and push me into the roof, and then he'd reach the next building, and get away, and the Walker case would be closed. My case, too.

"It was awful as that fellow reached the edge with me, had me on the bottom, was hitting me with the butt of his gun. Dammit, why didn't he shoot me?

"Away off I heard sirens. A million of them. A billion. And then I was sinking into something black and sticky and tasteless."

After they scraped the bad guy off the pavement, the police discovered both guns were completely empty. The Shadow's gunfights weren't that vicious!

Still an X-Mystery... was N. V. Romero a pseudonym?

That's as close to fantasy as The X-Man ever got. In fact, he was never seen again. Nor was N. V. Romero, a byline unique to that issue of *Star Detective*. I suspect it was somebody's pen name.

THE X-MAN

by N. V. Romero

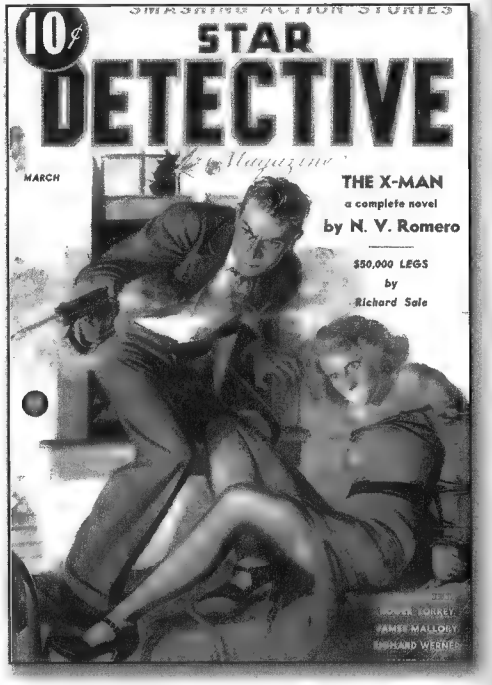
Memories can be long. It's well-documented that when Stan Lee and Jack Kirby conceived *The X-Men* in 1963, they wanted to call the book *The Mutants*. Lee didn't think Martin Goodman would go for that title, and *The X-Men* was substituted.

I wonder if perhaps, while they were kicking around other titles, Goodman's mind didn't flash back a mere 30 years and pull out the title of a cover story he once edited in his early career? It's not impossible.

Maybe it's a coincidence. If so, I have another one: In 1934, Lester Dent plotted a Doc Savage novel called *The Thousand-Headed Man* about "another" X-Man. An inmate of an asylum, he called himself X Man for mysterious and obscure reasons. Neither a mutant nor a G-Man, X Man turned out to be a trick name. The X stood for Unknown, as in Unknown Man. His initials concealed a hidden meaning. They were an anagram: M.A.N.—Matthew A. Nade. But the character was dropped from the book before Dent began writing, and so that pulp X Man can't claim to steal any of N. V. Romero's thunder.

Or Lee and Kirby's for that matter.

Some collectors believe that the Star Detective featuring "X-Man" may be the rarest issue.



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The Doom Patrol

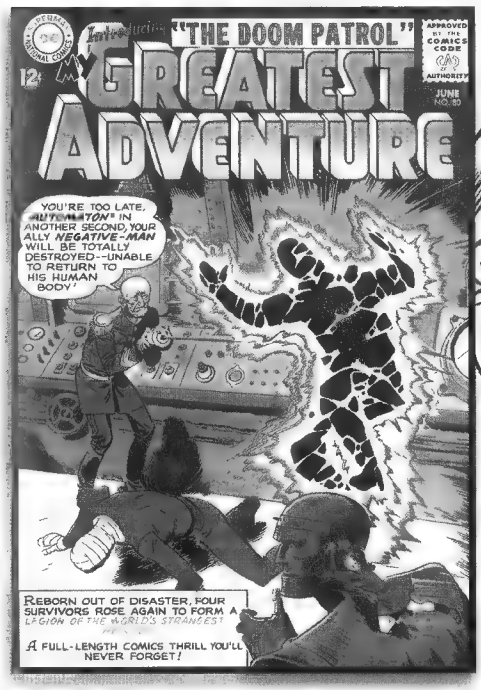
BY DOUGLAS R. KELLY

DP (Doom Patrol) has a strange history. It began when freelance writer Arnold Drake was approached by DC editor Murray Boltinoff in 1963, Boltinoff asked Drake to come up with something to boost the sagging *My Greatest Adventure*, a science fiction title that DC had been turning out since 1955. "I walked out of his place and thought 'I've got a lot of work to do,' " says Drake. "I bumped into Bob Haney and asked him if he was working on an assignment tonight, and he said 'No, I haven't had anything from Kanigher in about ten days.' I asked him to join me, and told him 'I have to have this thing done by Monday. I've gotten most of it in line, but I could use another character—let's see if we can come up with it together.' "

Drake is not certain which character was missing, but believes it was Robotman. "Bob said fine, so we worked out the other character together. Then we worked out the initial storyline, which was based on what I had already pitched to Murray: the idea of a man in a wheelchair bringing together these strange people." Says Bob Haney, "Arnold and I were collaborators on that first issue. We worked on the second issue, [then] I dropped out at that point, having other titles that I was concentrating on."

The brief collaboration produced a team that resembled nothing more than a therapy group. Drake and Haney had come up with a group of outcasts... people who had had rotten breaks in life, and who were feeling pretty sorry for themselves.

The new team would be called the Doom Patrol. Why the Doom Patrol? "I think I was inspired by the movie *Dawn Patrol*, which I had seen as a kid in the early 1930s," says Drake. [It starred Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and was a dark-humored picture about a group of aviators caught up in the horrors of war.] "It made quite an impression on me. Also, these people were going to


DC
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Introducing "THE DOOM PATROL"
MY GREATEST ADVENTURE
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JUNE
NO. 80
YOU'RE TOO LATE, AUTOMATON! IN ANOTHER SECOND, YOUR ALLY NEGATIVE-MAN WILL BE TOTALLY DESTROYED--UNABLE TO RETURN TO HIS HUMAN BODY!
REBORN OUT OF DISASTER, FOUR SURVIVORS ROSE AGAIN TO FORM A LEGION OF THE WORLD'S STRANGEST!
A FULL-LENGTH COMICS THRILL YOU'LL NEVER FORGET!

The Doom Patrol debuted in one of DC's "big six" sci-fi/mystery titles... My Greatest Adventure (#80, Jun 1963) which hit the stands in late April.

COVER STORY
The Doom Patrol
THIS IS THE ULTIMATE MISSION FOR WHICH I CREATED YOU--THE DESTRUCTION OF THE DOOM PATROL! SUMMON THE OTHERS!
YES, MASTER, I WILL OBEY!

places and doing things that could well result in their own 'dooms.' So it was a combination of those factors."

There was a reason why Murray Boltinoff was so anxious for Drake to give him a script: Boltinoff wanted to debut the new characters in the next issue of *My Greatest Adventure,* which meant the project instantly had a deadline of yesterday. An artist was brought in, a script was created and somehow, the three misfits and their leader made their debut in *MGA* #80, cover dated June 1963… and three months before *X-Men* #1.

The Roster

In the early issues, the red-bearded man in the wheelchair is called simply "The Chief." He is a brilliant scientific researcher who brings together three people to form a "legion of the world's strangest heroes" (as the cover of *MGA* #80 proclaimed): Rita Farr (Elasti-Girl), Larry Trainor (Negative Man) and Cliff Steele (Robotman). The Chief lives in a brownstone in Midway City, a location that would serve as the headquarters of the Doom Patrol for nearly the entire run of the book.

Why he's confined to a wheelchair is unknown in these early issues, although he does tell the others "I, too, have a handicap! But I conquered it with my brain by mastering every field of knowledge! In these rooms I go on adventures…adventures with my mind!" The Chief tells the three outcasts that society may see them as freaks, but he offers them an opportunity to band together to do some good. (Actually, he more or less "guilt trips" them into it, since he had saved each of their lives.) The three agree to form an alliance with the Chief, and at the conclusion of their first adventure as a team (in *MGA* #80), a newspaper headline that reads "AMAZING VICTORY OF DOOM PATROL" prompts the Chief to propose that they take that as their name.

Was the Chief based on a specific person or persons? "I don't believe I based him on a single person," says Arnold Drake. "The concept of the Chief was that he was a 'cerebral' hero, and the best way to prove that was to make him physically incapable."

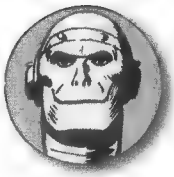
Rita Farr is a Hollywood actress (and former Olympic swimmer) who breathed in strange volcanic fumes while shooting a movie in Africa. The accident gave her the ability to shrink her body down to a tiny size or expand it to gigantic proportions. She acquires the name "Elasti-Girl" when she joins the Doom Patrol, although she is also referred to as "Elasti-Woman" in some issues.

Test pilot Larry Trainor became radioactive after flying an aircraft through a radiation belt in the upper atmosphere. As a result, he can now release from his body a strange, black-colored being made of radio waves. The catch is that the radio-being must return to Trainor's body within 60 seconds or Trainor will die. To protect those around him from his radiation, he must always be wrapped in special bandages. The radio-being becomes known as "Negative Man," although he is also sometimes referred to as "Negative-Man" or "The Negative Man." Although the radio-being cannot speak, he is accidentally shown speaking in *Doom Patrol* #105.

The third "super-freak" in the group is Cliff Steele. His career (and nearly his life) as a daredevil racing driver was cut short when he crashed his racecar. Since his brain was the only thing that could be salvaged after his body was "totally destroyed" in the accident, his brain was transplanted into a powerful mechanical body. That body made Steele essentially an immortal, since parts of it, or even the entire thing, could be replaced when damaged (although one has to wonder about his brain, which would presumably be subject to the same effects of aging as any living tissue).

Now called Robotman, Steele has super-strength. The Chief reveals in *MGA* #80 that it was he who performed the operation on Steele, a fact that would bring the two men into serious conflict later in the series.

This was not the first time a character named Robotman appeared in a

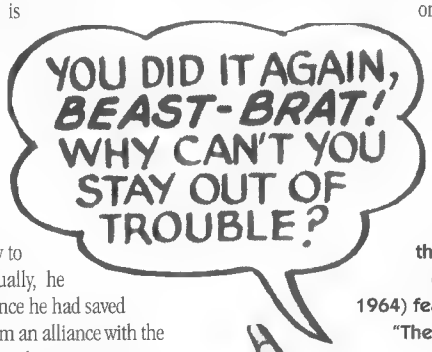


ROBOT MAN

ELASTI-GIRL

NEGATIVE MAN

THE CHIEF



FACING PAGE: **A closeup of the original from the cover of Doom Patrol #86 (Mar 1964) featuring the classic villains "The Brain" and his intelligent and evil gorilla assistant, Monsieur Mallah!**

comic book, of course: Golden Age books such as *Star Spangled Comics* and *Detective Comics* had featured a character named Robotman. In issue #87 (May 1964) of the *Doom Patrol*, a reader from New Mexico raised the subject in the letter column: "Many old fans who remember the original Robotman would like to see your Robotman drawn in the same likeness if for no other reason than nostalgia." The writer of the letter column replied that "Cliff Steele's Robotman is a completely different conception." That letter column scribe may well have been Arnold Drake, who echoes the idea that the two characters are distinct and separate. "I wasn't familiar with that earlier Robotman until Julie Schwartz brought it to my attention, and that was after the Doom Patrol had begun publication."

Although they agreed to work together under the direction of the Chief to battle evil and natural disasters, all was not sweetness and light in Doom Patrol headquarters. The three "heroes" the Chief had on his hands were mad at the world because of the bad break they had each been dealt. Unlike the majority of DC's titles at the time, this book featured characters who actually argued, fought and generally got on one another's nerves. At the time of the Doom Patrol's debut, Drake, Haney and company had had a year and a half to see how the folks at Marvel handled their characters in a realistic fashion, and were undoubtedly inspired to implement a similar approach at DC. "I understood that there were parts of the market that we'd be turning off by the approach…it wouldn't be that thrilling to kids who liked their superheroes very super," says Drake. "But I thought it had a good shot at becoming a running series."

The terrible secret of Negative Man is revealed as he strips the bandages from his face on the cover of Doom Patrol #87 (May 1964)

From Italy… By Way of Argentina

The man assigned to give visual life to the new team was Bruno Premiani. Originally from Trieste, Italy, Premiani graduated from the School of Industrial Art, then got a job drawing editorial cartoons for an Italian newspaper. After moving to Buenos Aires, Argentina, to take a job as an instructor at the National

INSPIRATION AT THE SPINNER RACK

"The Doom Patrol? Is this a new superhero team? Maybe not, with that 'Doom Patrol R.I.P.' inscription on that gravestone." Hopefully, I didn't say all of this out loud as I held Showcase #94 in my hands that summer day in 1977. I was in Cuff's, a variety shop that was the center of the universe for kids in Old Greenwich, Connecticut, where I lived. I was in high school at the time, and Cuff's was a regular stop in my travels.

I knew that DC was planning to revive Showcase, which had been defunct since 1973, but this Doom Patrol thing was news to me. I had missed them as a kid, when my taste in comics had run more to Archie and Sad Sack. After reading that first "revival" story by Paul Kupperberg and Joe Staton, I had to know more. Thus began a study of, and a deep appreciation for, the original Doom Patrol, which continues to the present.

It also ignited a back issue search. I haunted flea markets and antique shops looking for copies of the original run, and my collection slowly grew. With due respect to Kupperberg and Staton, I didn't much care for the new team, with the exception of Robotman. As the years went by, I came to realize that was due to the exceptional talents of Arnold Drake, Bruno Premiani and Bob Brown. These men brought to life a world of strange superbeings, evil villains and fantastic possibilities. The new team couldn't hope to compete with that.

Here's to you, gentlemen.

—Douglas R. Kelly

School of Fine Arts, Premiani became one of that country's most famous newspaper artists.

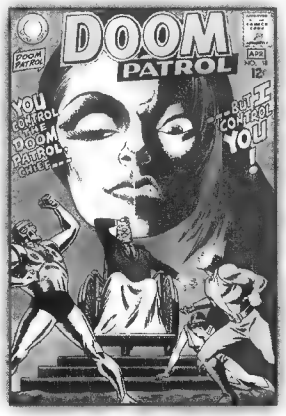
His pencils (which he inked himself) gave the Doom Patrol a look of elegant simplicity, a quality that has held up well over time. Premiani's human figure was accurate in terms of overall look, without going into excessive detail—but there was a notable exception. When Premiani rendered a running figure, the figure tended to look as though he or she was frozen in that one position. "They almost looked like mechanical men more than real people," says Arnold Drake. "As good as Bruno was, Murray Boltinoff always had a little trouble with him. For some reason, almost all the women Bruno drew looked like they'd been born in Italy, or southern France or Greece—distinctly European. I think Murray wanted a 'Hitchcock heroine,' with lots of blond hair.

"But Bruno was a classy artist. I really enjoyed his work."

Premiani's economy of line extended to his backgrounds. Although elements such as buildings, furniture, vehicles, etc., were included when necessary, Premiani often presented the characters against a simple, one-color background. This resulted in the character or characters becoming the focus of the scene, rather than extraneous details.

Beginning with *My Greatest Adventure* #85, Bob Brown became the cover artist. With the exception of the covers of *Doom Patrol* #109, 110 and 112 (done by Premiani), #120 (done by Jack Sparling) and #121 (the last issue, done by Joe Orlando), Brown continued as cover artist until the end of the run. He was a master at rendering larger than life (literally) creatures attacking the Doom Patrol. The cover of #115 is a wonderful example of this, featuring as it does a gigantic monster whose head is simply a huge eyeball. It's tearing up the street by shooting a force beam out of its eye while our heroes dive for cover.

As time went on, Brown was also tapped to draw occasional interior stories.



ABOVE: **The moody Joe Orlando cover on Doom Patrol #121 (Sep/Oct 1968) undoubtedly gave readers a jolt when they saw it on the rack in the summer of 1968. The issue marked the end of the line for the original series.**

LEFT: **Doom Patrol #118 (Mar/Apr 1968) showcased the the villain "Videx, Monarch of Light"**

The Mutant Connection

The similarity between this new team and Marvel's equally new X-Men was unmistakable, and it's been a subject of heated debate for more than 30 years. Although the Doom Patrol made its debut three months prior to the unveiling of the X-Men, anyone familiar with publishing schedules knows that Stan Lee and his people had to be working on their merry band of mutants even as the DP was making its entrance.

Arnold Drake: "Three or four weeks after I turned in the script on the Doom Patrol, I learned that Stan was working on something similar. The idea of a team with mixed powers had been around for quite a while, of course; but the fact that Stan had a wheelchair-bound leader threw me for a loop! I couldn't really believe that that was accidental. Mort Weisinger (because it wasn't his idea) put it down by saying 'Well, Nero Wolfe worked out of a wheelchair, you know, so the idea [has been] around.'"

It is possible that the nearly simultaneous creation of the two teams which were both lead by a wheelchair-bound leader was an incredible coincidence. There was one major difference between the two groups (besides the fact that the X-Men had five members to the Doom Patrol's three): while the members of the Doom Patrol acquired their powers by accident, the X-Men were mutants, each *born* with his or her particular ability.

But to have a genius in a wheelchair (Professor Charles

Continued on page 46

The Metal Men, DC Comics'
actually

classic robot heroes of the Silver Age were created by accident, in more ways than one

Doc Magnus and the METAL MEN

BY MURRAY R. WARD

Most already know that the Silver Age at DC started with the creation of the "trial balloon" title, *Showcase*, in 1956. Unlike DC's other series, it was passed to a different editor with each issue, as each took a turn at creating a new feature that might prove popular enough to be granted its own title. Early successes were Julius Schwartz' revival of the Flash, Jack Schiff's heroic team, the Challengers of the Unknown, and Mort Weisinger's Superman spin-off, Lois Lane. Space Ranger moved into the lead spot in *Tales Of The Unexpected* and Adam Strange did the same in *Mystery In Space*, followed by Rip Hunter, the second incarnation of Green Lantern, the Sea Devils, Golden Age holdover Aquaman, and the new Atom, each of whom graduated to a star berth. But along the way, someone got a mite confused at the DC offices, and they lost track of which editor's turn it was to do the next *Showcase* issue.

Robert Kanigher leaped into the breach, although it was not his turn, promising to create a new feature over a weekend and turn in a finished script by Monday. For inspiration, Kanigher borrowed a science reference text from the desk of his office-mate, Julie Schwartz, a book containing the Periodic Table of Elements. The following Monday, Ross Andru and Mike Esposito, the then-current art team on *Wonder Woman*, another Kanigher title, hurriedly began penciling and inking the adventures of a team of robot heroes, each of whom possessed the attributes of a different chemical element: the Metal Men.

The Metal Men debuted in *Showcase* #37, dated March/April 1962. Unlike DC's earlier Robotman character, a scientist whose gray matter had been transplanted into a mechanical body, the Metal Men were actual robots, created by the genius inventor, "Doc" Will Magnus. (Curiously, a year later, a new hero created by Russ Manning for Gold Key Comics would be dubbed Magnus, Robot Fighter, but DC's Magnus was a robot-builder.) "Doc" activated his robotic sextet at the request of the United States Department of Defense, in order to battle a giant manta-ray creature which had been frozen in suspended animation in an ice floe for millions of years, then revived and transformed into a radioactive menace by an atomic blast. The Metal Men succeeded in ending the threat, but were destroyed in the process.

With this, Bob Kanigher figured his job was done… until his fellow editors informed him that his new feature was to continue in *Showcase* for three consecutive issues, a practice that had become the norm in the title. Having killed off his protagonists in their first adventure, Kanigher rolled up his sleeves and brought them back to life two months later. In *Showcase* #38, Doc recreated the Metal Men, thus beginning a cycle which would continue throughout the run of the strip, as the Metal Men were repeatedly destroyed and reactivated to fight again another day. Another Metal Men "custom" was inaugurated in *Showcase* #39, as Doc and the metal band "broke the fourth wall" and directly addressed the readers, asking them to write in if they wanted to see more of the team's adventures.

Their return would come more quickly than anyone had planned, however, because after six months of Kanigher's heroic holding action, the DC staff had forgotten to reinstate the round-robin succession of *Showcase* editors, and now no one was slated to take over with issue #40. Once again, Kanigher saved the day, producing a fourth Metal Men adventure. That this issue was put together in a bit of haste is evident in that Kanigher drafted Chemo, the villain of the previous issue, for another battle with the robots, rather than create a new menace, and that throughout the issue, Doc Magnus is mistakenly called Doc Evans (Doc Evans was a team member of another Kanigher group, the Suicide Squad, which had recently been featured in *Brave & Bold*).

METAL MEN

After an unplanned creation and an unplanned four-issue tryout run, the Metal Men continued the *Showcase* "streak" of successes and moved into their own bi-monthly title, beginning in April/May 1963.

Doc Magnus's creation of the Metal Men, like Bob Kanigher's, was also something of an accident. Rather than being mechanical constructs filled with complex internal circuitry, each of the Metal Men seemed to be composed entirely of the element from which he took his name, with no wires or visible joints. In effect, like Pinocchio, they were "stringless puppets" animated by magic. The "magic" in this case was a product of Doc Magnus's advanced science, a microscopic nuclear-powered computer activator called a "responsometer" located in the head of each robot, which gave each Metal Man the ability to reshape his own body in any way, subject to the limitations of his namesake element. Due to the unique circumstances of their creation, involving intense aurora borealis activity at the time, the Metal Men each possessed an individual human-like personality, which reflected itself in their actions and speech patterns. While this unforeseen development was to cause their inventor endless consternation, since it rendered the robots autonomous thinking beings rather than obedient servants, it also provided the crux of the Metal Men's success as a fighting team.

Gold, known as the "noble metal," was the group's leader in the absence of Doc. Gold is both highly ductile (able to be drawn into fine wire) and highly malleable (able to be hammered into thin sheets). Lead, loyal and dependable, was the slowest-witted member of the team. Soft and heavy, and thus somewhat ponderous, he often formed an alloy with other Metal Men, or acted in tandem with Iron. His most frequent role was that of a shield against radiation. Iron was the strong, silent type, with the primary characteristics of durability and hardness. Mercury, fond of boasting that he's "the only metal that's liquid at room temperature," was quick-tempered, moody, and above all, vain, despite his tendency to break into globules at inopportune moments. Tall and long-legged, he was colored red like the mercury in a thermometer rather than the silver-white of quicksilver, so as to distinguish him from Tin and Lead (although Mercury would say that he needed no such distinction). Tin, the so-called "humble metal," was forever unsure of his worth, possessing an inferiority complex which caused him to speak with an interminable stutter. His insecurity frequently caused him to attempt foolhardy actions, such as performing tasks better suited to Iron or Lead. While not at all ductile, he was extremely malleable, as well as being useful as a container or coating.

Tina & Doc... and Nameless

And then there was the female robot, Platinum! Better known by her feminine diminutive, Tina, than by her element name, she was the original group's lone "female" member. Her properties of ductility and malleability are similar to those of Gold.

Immediately upon her creation, Tina fell in love with her inventor, Doc Magnus, who realistically insisted upon seeing her as a robot and not as an object of romantic affection, thus initiating a recurring dilemma familiar to readers of the fable of *Pygmalion and Galatea*, George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* and its musical adaptation *My Fair*

LOOK AT PLATINUM ACTING LIKE A SILLY HUMAN FEMALE-- INSTEAD OF A ROBOT!
DON'T BE HARD ON TINA, MERCURY! YOU KNOW SHE'S GOT A DEFECTIVE "RESPONSOMETER"? MAYBE--THAT'S WHY SHE HAS A LITTLE OF BOTH ROBOT--AND A FEMALE IN HER?
GOLD'S RIGHT, MERC! MAYBE MY BRAIN'S IRON--BUT I CAN SEE THE POOR KID IS A LITTLE MIXED UP!

METAL MEN COMIC COURTESY THE M. NAIMAN COLLECTION

Lady, and Lester Del Rey's science fiction story, *Helen O'Loy*. More often than not, Tina's fruitless attempts to impress Doc, her anger at his dating human women, and her unsuccessful searches for alternate suitors were the cause of the Metal Men's latest conflict.

When, after their initial destruction, Doc attempted to replace the original group by merely creating a duplicate team of robots, he discovered that while these second "Metal Men" possessed none of the individual quirks of their predecessors and reacted like "normal" robots, they were easily defeated by menaces which the first Metal Men could have vanquished. Unable to duplicate the rare occurrence of the aurora borealis activity, Doc could only recreate the "real" Metal Men by rebuilding them using the remains of the original robots. After their initial successful battles against such menaces as Chemo, the Metal Men were allowed to remain permanently active and resided at Doc Magnus's sprawling laboratory complex, rather than being "shut down" or deactivated after each exploit.

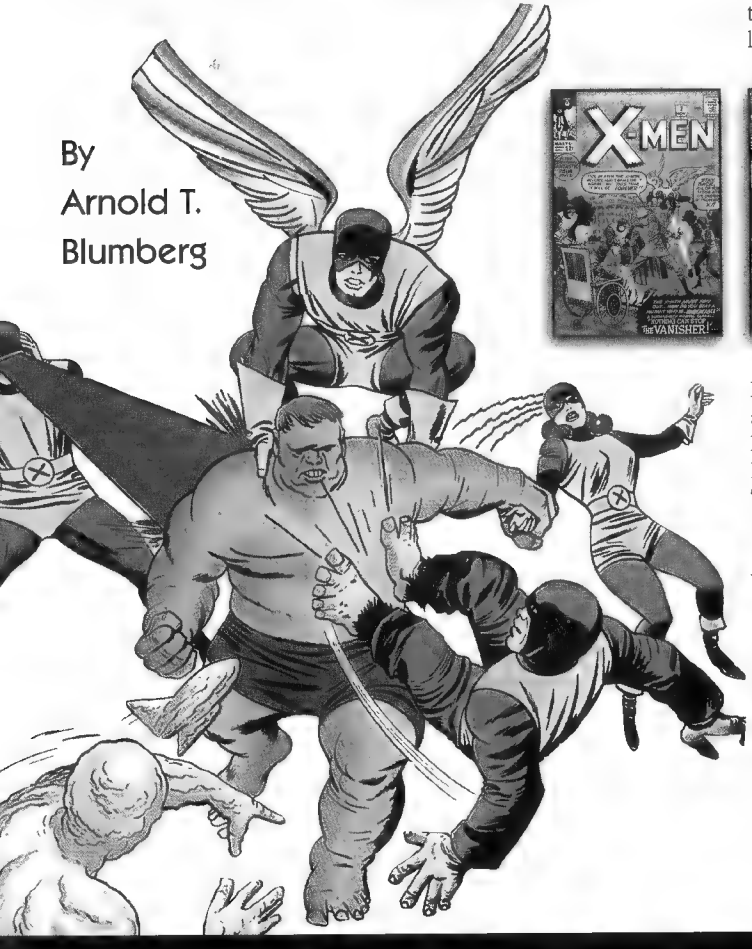
The chief supporting character in the *Metal Men* title was Doc Magnus, the robots' creator, who also led them into battle on many of their missions. Independently wealthy with millions from his many patents and inventions, Doc kept permanent living quarters on the grounds of his huge lab complex just outside a major American city (presumably New York, although never named). His scientific reputation for the accomplishment of seeming technological miracles was such that the Department of Defense established a permanent liason with him through Colonel (later General) Henry Caspar, and often called on him for aid in national emergencies. Doc was a bachelor, and apparently determined to stay that way. He had a string of beautiful girlfriends, many of whom were professional fashion models, but established a permanent relationship with none of them. Unfortunately for him, his best-known romantic entanglement was with Tina, his own robot creation. Although genuinely fond of Tina, Doc could never forget that she was a robot... especially when she insisted on kissing him with her metal lips, which he claimed "taste(d) like a slap in the face with a cold platinum bracelet." However, if it were possible for Tina to be transformed into a human woman, it seems certain she would be the one to end Doc's bachelorhood. Doc's attempts to end Tina's infatuation with him, whether by replacing her on the team, installing a new responsometer in her, or finding her another "boyfriend," ended in disaster as often as her attempts to win him over to her point of view.

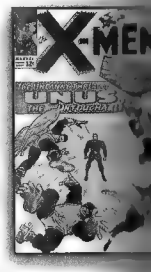
ART BY: ANDRU AND ESPOSITO

The only member to join the Metal Men after their creation, "Nameless" was Tin's robot girlfriend. Also made of tin, she shared his various properties and powers. She was created in *Metal Men* #13 when the lonely Tin, seeking companionship, combined a Do-It-Yourself Robot Kit with spare parts from Doc's lab, including a working responsometer. The result was a cute but ungainly female robot with a stammer and inferiority complex that duplicated those of her creator, but who idolized Tin as much as Tina adored Doc. Unable to decide on a name for their new addition, since the names "Tin" and "Tina" were already taken, the Metal *Continued on page 58*

Kept secret from the world by their mysterious mentor, Professor Charles Xavier, "The strangest super-heroes of all!" captured the imagination of readers with their bizarre abilities and amazing adventures. Clad in blue and yellow costumes with the omnipresent "X" emblazoned on their belts, the labyrinthine saga of the X-Men began when the first issue hit the stands in the summer of 1963!

By Arnold T. Blumberg





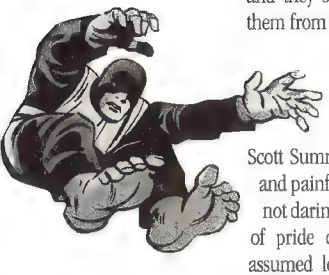
Xavier was his name… and his story began like so many others in those early days of the Marvel Universe. It seemed The House of Ideas could do no wrong and every debut was heralded by trumpet blasts announcing the arrival of another pop culture icon. Yet through it all, one theme consistently loomed large in the origins of Marvel's characters… inescapable tragedy! Perhaps it was the influence of chief scribe and universe-creator Stan Lee that left such an indelible trail of tears on those otherwise bright and gaudy pages, but in the beginnings of every Marvel hero, there are the wounds of lonely childhoods, failed romances, and profound loss… mostly failed romances. Ben Grimm, a man trapped in the body of a monster, must live with the fear that the girl he loves may never love him back because of his appearance; Bruce Banner, doomed to transform into a hideous brute, is also kept from the woman he loves by his accidental affliction; Matt Murdock, blessed with enhanced senses, is afraid to tell Karen Page of his feelings due to his blindness and insecurity; Tony Stark, a billionaire playboy, now forced to live encased and isolated in a suit of armor to keep his fragile heart beating; and, of course, Spider-Man, the quintessential loser, who becomes a hero when he learns he was directly responsible for the death of his uncle and whose guilt keeps him tormented, alone, and unlucky in love (for a while at least).

Seen in this light, Stan's portrayal of the X-Men—teenagers recruited by the enigmatic Professor Charles Xavier for the purpose of training them in the use of their mutant abilities for the benefit of mankind—places them at the pinnacle of a comic book promontory populated by pitiable protagonists. These honorable mutants are Homo Superior, humans with an "x-tra" power that sets them apart from other men, and yet they are downtrodden and exiled from normal society. They are

We're talkin' Stan & Jack's early stuff... if you

didn't know that, give yourself ten demerits!

X-MEN



hated, feared, and hunted because of their mutant heritage, but they remain dedicated to protecting humanity from their evil 'siblings.' They are the ultimate outsiders—the unwanted—and they serve the very people who would gladly eliminate them from existence.

As if their predicament wasn't enough, Stan piled on the personal turmoil more than in any other Marvel title. Within a few panels of the first issue alone, we learn that two members of the team—Scott Summers (Cyclops), and Professor Xavier—are secretly and painfully pining for new student Jean Grey (Marvel Girl), not daring to reveal their love for foolish reasons of pride or propriety. In #8, having already assumed leadership of the X-Men, Scott ruminates, "if only I could tell her the words I really want to say! How gorgeous her lips are… "how silken her hair is… how I love her! But I dare not… not when I'm supposed to be their leader!" Stan obviously had issues regarding romantic relationships, and it was that all-too-real and uncomfortable depiction of adolescent angst over the opposite sex that further endeared Marvel characters to their readers. Here were heroes, seemingly the luckiest people on the face of the Earth, and yet they were persecuted for their powers and unable even to seek happiness with one another.

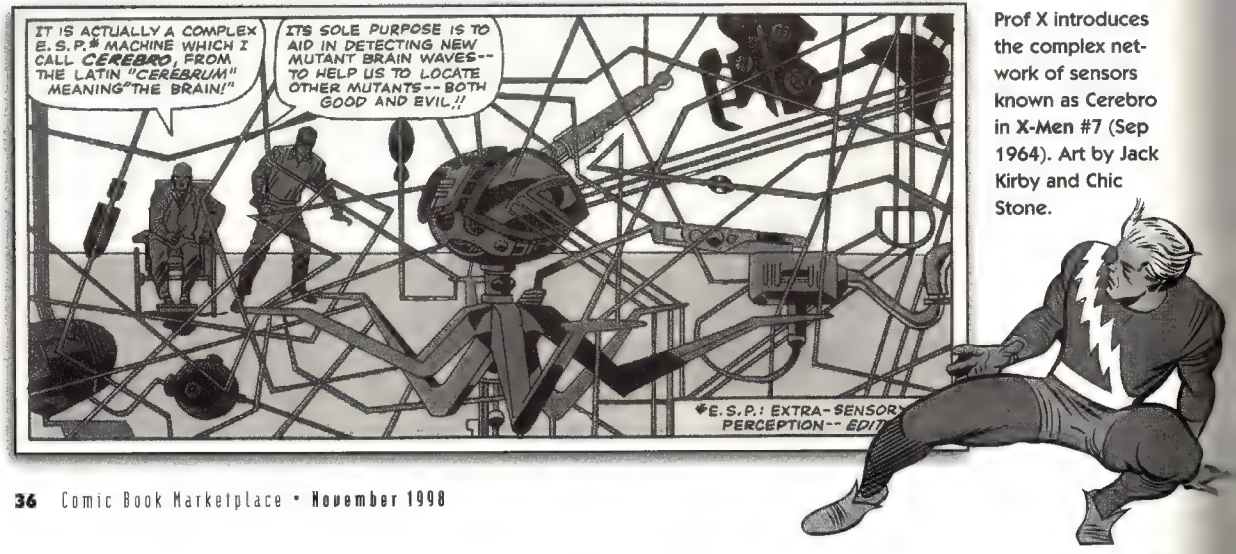
DESPITE THEIR SEEMING YOUTH AND INEXPERIENCE, THEY ARE MIGHTY ANTAGONISTS! I MUST NEVER AGAIN MAKE THE MISTAKE OF UNDER-ESTIMATING THEM! BUT I SHALL STILL PROVE TO BE THEIR MASTER!

During his first encounter with the X-Men (#1, Sep 1963) Magneto realizes he has found adversaries worthy of his powers. Art by Jack Kirby and Paul Reinman.

Later writers would exploit the darker qualities of Marvel's mutant contingent and elevate the tragedy to mythic proportion, introducing a genocidal undercurrent in many Marvel books that played off of very real historical horrors and culminated in stories like "The Days of Future Past," in which an alternate future finds all mutants either exterminated or interred by frighteningly monstrous robot sentries known as Sentinels. Here in the formative days of the team, however, the tragedy took a back seat to adventure, and in the first seventeen issues shaped by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, a legacy was born that would last for thirty-five years and spawn some of the most successful comic book characters and series ever published.

And Lo, There is a Beginning!

The evolution of the team as we know them today is a long and complicated one, but the basic ingredients fell quickly into place within the first year of the series. As a counterpoint to the X-Men—Cyclops, Marvel Girl, the high-flying Angel (Warren Worthington III), the gregarious Beast (Hank McCoy), the cool Iceman (Bobby Drake), and Xavier, code-named Professor X—we were also introduced to Magneto and his Brotherhood of Evil Mutants. Never one to rely merely on black-hat villains, Stan and Jack injected a certain level of pathos and internal conflict that planted the seeds for years of intriguing storylines. As much a mentor and teacher to his malignant band as Xavier was to his X-Men, Magneto was hell-bent on dominating Homo sapiens with the help of his misfit team—Mastermind, the Toad, and the two siblings, Quicksilver (Pietro Maximoff), and the Scarlet Witch (Wanda). From their earliest appearance in #4, Wanda and Pietro were somewhat reluctant colleagues of Magneto's, and possessed of a con- *Continued on page 50*


IT IS ACTUALLY A COMPLEX E.S.P.* MACHINE WHICH I CALL CEREBRO, FROM THE LATIN "CEREBRUM" MEANING "THE BRAIN!"
ITS SOLE PURPOSE IS TO AID IN DETECTING NEW MUTANT BRAIN WAVES-- TO HELP US TO LOCATE OTHER MUTANTS-- BOTH GOOD AND EVIL.!!
*E.S.P.: EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION-- EDIT

Prof X introduces the complex network of sensors known as Cerebro in X-Men #7 (Sep 1964). Art by Jack Kirby and Chic Stone.

X-Men #3 (Jan 1964)

X-Men #5 (May 1964)

X-Men #10 (Mar 1965)

X-Men #12 (Jul 1965)

X-Men #13 (Sep 1965)

X-Men #14 (Nov 1965)

X-Men #15 (Dec 1965)

X-Men #16 (Jan1966)

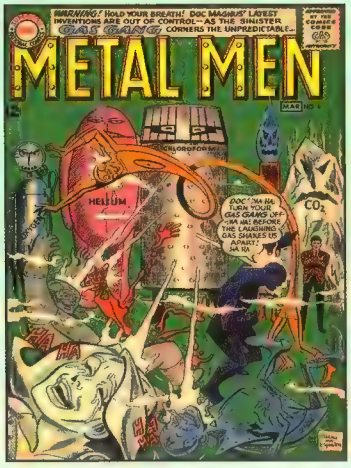
X-Men #17 (Feb 1966)

Showcase #38 (May/Jun 1962)

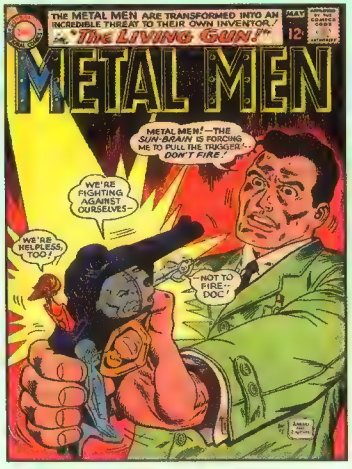
Metal Men #1 (Apr/May 1963)

NOW! IN THEIR 2ND SPECTACULAR BOOK!
BATTLING THE "ROBOTS of TERROR!"
METAL MEN
THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT, PLATINUM!
MERCURY'S RIGHT! HOW CAN I STOP THESE MENACES I INVENTED?

Metal Men #2 (Jun/July 1963)

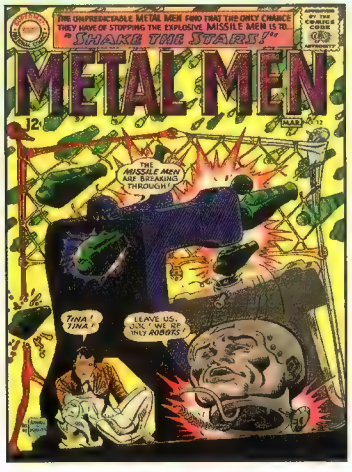


Metal Men #6 (Feb/Mar 1964)

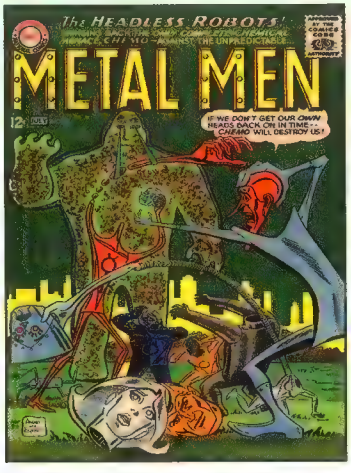

METAL MEN
"THE LIVING GUN!"
METAL MEN!—THE SUN-BRAIN IS FORCING ME TO PULL THE TRIGGER... DON'T FIRE!
WE'RE FIGHTING AGAINST OURSELVES—
WE'RE HELPLESS, TOO!
NOT TO FIRE—DOC!

Metal Men #7 (Apr/May 1964)

Metal Men #8 (Jun/Jul 1964)



Metal Men #12 (Feb/Mar 1965)



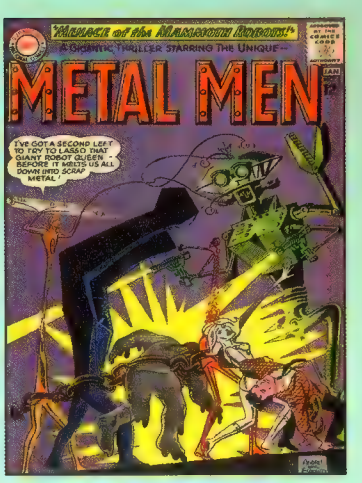
Metal Men #14 (Jun/Jul 1965)

READ "I MARRIED A KNIGHT!"
THE MAD TALE EVEN ELECTRONIC BRAINS ARE READING!
METAL MEN
STOP HIM!—DOC'S HYPNOTIZED! HE DOESN'T REALIZE HE'S ABOUT TO MARRY AN EVIL ROBOT THE ROBOT WHO TRAPPED US!
THE UNIQUE METAL MEN ALWAYS WANTED THEIR INVENTOR TO MARRY A ROBOT—THEIR OWN TINA! THE TROUBLE IS—HE'S MARRYING THE WRONG ROBOT!

Metal Men #17 (Dec 1965/Jan 1966)

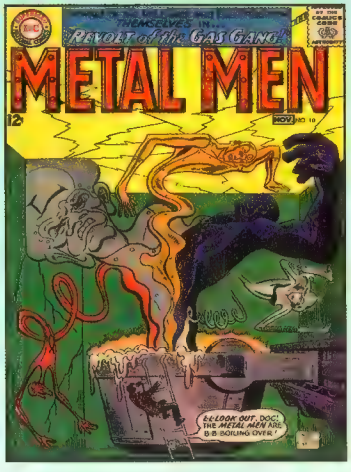
Metal Men #3 (Aug/Sep 1963)

Metal Men #4 (Oct/Nov 1963)



Metal Men #5 (Dec 1963/Jan 1964)

Metal Men #9 (Aug/Sep 1964)



Metal Men #10 (Oct/Nov 1964)

Metal Men #11 (Dec 1964/Jan 1965)

Metal Men #18 (Feb/Mar 1966)

METAL MEN
The MAN-HORSE of HADES LASHES THE METAL MEN INTO A RELAY RACE OF DOOM—IN WHICH THE ROBOT WHO WINS—CONDEMNS ALL THE OTHERS TO DEATH!
READERS! ARE YOU DOING YOUR PART TO NAME "HAMLET!"? READERS' LISTS WILL SOON BE PUBLISHED! WATCH FOR YOUR CHOICE!

Metal Men #19 (Apr/May 1966)

Metal Men #20 (Jun/Jul 1966)

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"THE DOOM PATROL"
GREATEST ADVENTURE
YOU'RE TOO LATE, AUTOMATON! IN ANOTHER SECOND, YOUR ALLY NEGATIVE MAN WILL BE TOTALLY DESTROYED—UNABLE TO RETURN TO HIS HUMAN BODY!
REBORN OUT OF DISASTER, FOUR SURVIVORS ROSE AGAIN TO FORM A LEGION OF THE WORLD'S STRANGEST!
A FULL-LENGTH COMICS THRILL YOU'LL NEVER FORGET!

My Greatest Adv. #80 (Jun 1963)

Starring THE DOOM PATROL
GREATEST ADVENTURE
CLIFF, RITA USED HER POWERS TO GROW A GIANT SO SHE COULD TORPEDO THE SEA-BEAST!
THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES vs. The NIGHTMARE MAKER!

My Greatest Adv. #81 (Aug 1963)

THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES- IN ANOTHER NEW DOUBLE-LENGTH THRILLER!
GREATEST ADVENTURE
CLIFF, GET AWAY BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
NO, I'VE GOT TO DESTROY THIS THERMAL UNIT BEFORE IT BURNS EARTH TO A CRISP...
EVEN IF I'M DESTROYED WITH IT!

My Greatest Adv. #82 (Sep 1963)

THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES!
THE DOOM PATROL
THIS IS THE ULTIMATE MISSION FOR WHICH I CREATED YOU—THE DESTRUCTION OF THE DOOM PATROL! SUMMON THE OTHERS!
YES, MASTER, I WILL OBEY!

Doom Patrol #86 (Mar 1964)

THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES!
THE DOOM PATROL
ONLY I CAN STOP THESE MECHANICAL SOLDIERS—BY REMOVING MY RADIO-ACTIVE BANDAGES! BUT THE RAYS CAN DESTROY YOU, TOO, ELASTY-GIRL!
The TERRIBLE SECRET of NEGATIVE MAN! FINALLY IS REVEALED WHEN The BROTHERHOOD of EVIL STRIKES AGAIN!

Doom Patrol #87 (May 1964)

THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES!
THE DOOM PATROL
THE MOST INCREDIBLE STORY EVER TOLD— THE ORIGIN OF THE CHIEF— "The MAN WHO LIVED TWICE!"
I'VE CAPTURED THESE OF THE DOOM PATROL AND NOW—AT LAST—MY TRIUMPH! THE DESTRUCTION OF YOUR CHIEF!

Doom Patrol #88 (Jun 1964)

The DOOM PATROL
TICK TICK
EVERYTHING'S GOING LIKE CLOCK-WORK! BY THE TIME ELASTY-GIRL REACHES HER TEAMMATES, THE TIME BOMB WILL EXPLODE!

Doom Patrol #92 (Dec 1964)

Doom Patrol #93 (Feb 1965)

The DOOM PATROL
THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES!
ANOTHER SECOND, AND ROBOTMAN'S HUMAN BRAIN WILL BE DESTROYED, AND WE DON'T KNOW WHERE THE CONTROLS ARE!
REVEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME! A SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF ROBOTMAN!

Doom Patrol #94 (Mar 1965)

starring "THE DOOM PATROL"
GREATEST ADVENTURE
THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES ARE THREATENED BY ONE OF THEIR OWN TEAM MEN...
"NEGATIVE MAN GOES BERSERK!"
IF I CAN'T TRAP NEGATIVE MAN IN THIS FUNNEL, HE'LL DESTROY US BOTH!

My Greatest Adv. #83 (Nov 1963)

starring "THE DOOM PATROL"
MY GREATEST ADVENTURE
THEIR DEADLIEST ENEMY AGAIN THREATENS THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES IN "THE PARTNERSHIP OF CRIME AND TERROR!"
IMMORTUS DROPPED ROBOTMAN INTO MOLTEN LEAD—AND NOW HE CONTROLS HIM!

My Greatest Adv. #84 (Dec 1963)

THE DOOM PATROL
GREATEST ADVENTURE
The FURIES from 4,000 MILES BELOW!
JUST AS WE WERE READY TO BATTLE THAT ATOMIC MENACE IT TRAPPED US!

My Greatest Adv. #85 (Feb 1964)

THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES BATTLE A TRIPLE THREAT—THREE VILLAINS IN ONE—THE MAN WHO BECOMES
"The ANIMAL-VEGETABLE-MINERAL ENEMY!"
THE DOOM PATROL

Doom Patrol #89 (Aug 1964)

THE WORLD'S WEIRDEST VILLAINS—"THE BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL"—TURN THEIR DEADLIEST WEAPON ON THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES!
THE DOOM PATROL
The SPY WITHIN THE DOOM PATROL!
I NOW KNOW WHICH OF YOU IS THE IMPOSTOR SENT HERE TO DESTROY OUR TEAM—AND I MUST KILL YOU!

Doom Patrol #90 (Sep 1964)

The DOOM PATROL
THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES!
YOU ARE ALL PRISONERS OF GARGUAX!
ONLY I CAN SAVE YOU FROM THE MASTER OF PLASTIC MEN! FORGET OUR TWO PAST

Doom Patrol #91 (Nov 1964)

THE DOOM PATROL
THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES!
THEY'RE TRAPPED AND I CAN'T HELP THEM BECAUSE THE QUAKE IS SWALLOWING UP MY ROBOT BODY!

Doom Patrol #95 (May 1965)

The DOOM PATROL
THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES!
TH-THE G-GIANT JUKEBOX V-VIBRATIONS ARE SH-SHAKING TH-THE CITY A-APART!
COBRA JUKEBOX CO.
"The DAY THE WORLD WENT MAD!"

Doom Patrol #96 (Jun 1965)

Starring the ORIGINAL
The DOOM PATROL
THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES!
HOT!
SEE
THE GREATEST MOB OF MENACES EVER!
The BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL!
GENERAL IMMORTUS!
GARGUAX!
in "WAR of the MIND SLAVES!"
SEE
"BLASTI-GOOK," A RAGING CAVIAL GIANT!
DOOM PATROL PRISONERS OF THE MOON!
ROBOTMAN, YOU'VE GOT ONE MINUTE LEFT TO CALM DOWN BLASTI-GOOK, OTHERWISE WE OPEN FIRE!

Doom Patrol #97 (Aug 1965)

© 1998 DC

REVEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME: A DIAGRAM OF THE SECRET DOOM PATROL HEADQUARTERS!
The DOOM PATROL
THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES!
"I'M FIRING YOU!" CRIED THE CHIEF, STAGGERING THE TEAM. BUT CAN THEY REUNITE TO FIGHT AGAIN AFTER
"The DEATH of the DOOM PATROL!"
PLUS
THE WORLD IS A TIME-BOMB AS CAMERA MAN STOP-ACTION'S IT IN
60 SINISTER SECONDS!
NO. 103 - "THE ATOM MASTER" - THE AMAZING MINDBOY OF MR. THINGY PLANNED TO MAKE CAN DESTROY EACH OF US!

Doom Patrol #98 (Sep 1965)

ROBOTMAN
NEGATIVE MAN
WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES!
The DOOM PATROL
NEW!
NOW THAT YOU'RE TRAPPED IN MY COCOON MY DEADLY BEES WILL FINISH THE JOB!
MEE-BEAST-BOY
THE WILDEST, WEIRDEST TEEN TORNADO IN COMICS HISTORY! SEE HIM TRY TO BLAST HIS WAY ONTO THE TEAM
CRAWLING KILLERS!
THE FANTASTIC BUG-MAN
AND HIS INCREDIBLE INSECT ARMY

Doom Patrol #99 (Nov 1965)

ROBOTMAN
NEGATIVE MAN
THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES!
The DOOM PATROL
UNCHAINED! ROBOTMAN RUNS RIOT WHEN HE BECOMES A FRANKENSTEIN!
PLUS THE SHATTERING SECRET BEHIND DC'S GREATEST NEW HERO:
The ORIGIN of BEAST-BOY!
YOU DID IT AGAIN, BEAST-BOY! WHY CAN'T YOU STAY OUT OF TROUBLE?

Doom Patrol #100 (Dec 1965)

YOU SAID IT COULD NEVER HAPPEN!
The DOOM PATROL
AND I PRONOUNCE YOU DEAD!
NOW I PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE
JOIN THE WORLD'S WILDEST WEDDING PARTY!
NOT A HOAX! NOT A DREAM! BUT THE REAL STUFF!
ELASTI-GIRL MARRIES MENTO!

Doom Patrol #104 (Jun 1966)

THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES!
The DOOM PATROL
THE RETURN OF THAT ENCYCLOPEDIA OF EVIL— MA 103— THREATENS THE D.P. NEWLYWEDS ON A "HONEYMOON OF TERROR!"

Doom Patrol #105 (Aug 1966)

OUR FABULOUS FREAKS FACE THE SUPER-FINKS CALLED THE
The DOOM PATROL
HOLY CHANGELINGS! MA 103 IS BACK AGAIN, BIGGER THAN EVER AND HE'S GOT ME!
"PRIVATE WORLD OF NEGATIVE MAN!"
COULDN'T YOU WRITE YOUR THRILLING AUTOBIOGRAPHY AFTER WE GET HIM OFF MY BACK?

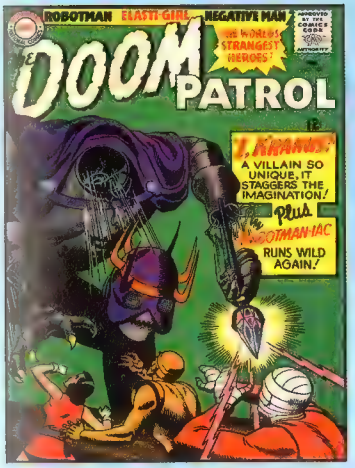
Doom Patrol #106 (Sep 1966)

DOOM PATROL
INCREDIBLE! THE JUDGE AWARDS BEAST BOY TO THAT CHANGE-FINK GALTRY! BUT WHICH BEAST BOY? SEE IT ALL IN...
TRIAL by TERROR!
STARRING ROBOTMAN ELASTI-GIRL NEGATIVE MAN
YOU SENT ME TO DESTROY BEAST BOY, GALTRY - BUT WHICH IS THE REAL ONE?

Doom Patrol #110 (Mar 1967)

Doom Patrol #111 (May 1967)

Doom Patrol #112 (Jun 1967)

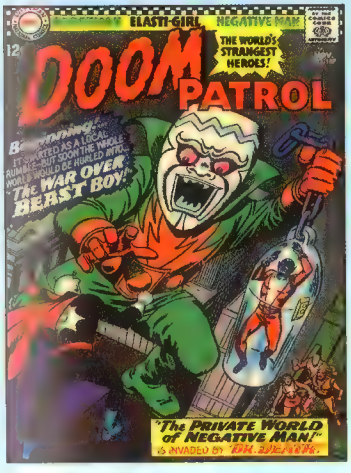


Doom Patrol #101 (Feb 1966)

THE DOOM PATROL
GUEST-STARRING
CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN
8 AGAINST ETERNITY!
BEAST-BOY, THAT TERRIFIC TORNADO, TIMM-MINOR JUGGERNAUT, THAT—
ROTTEN KID!
MEETS MENTO, THAT MIND-MASTER, THAT PSYCHIC DYNAMO THAT—
POT-HEADED NUT!
IT'S MULTI-MAN IN A NEW FORM USING THE CHALLS FOR FISH FOOD!

Doom Patrol #102 (Mar 1966)

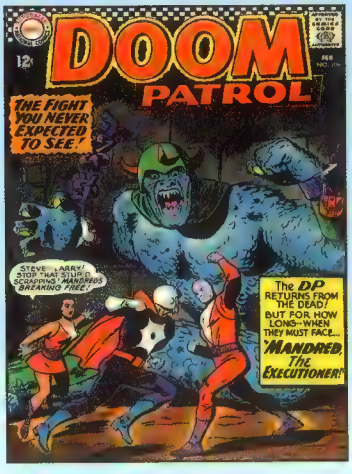
Doom Patrol #103 (May 1966)


ELASTI-GIRL NEGATIVE MAN
DOOM PATROL
THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES!
THE WAR OVER BEAST BOY!
"The PRIVATE WORLD of NEGATIVE MAN!"
IS INVADED BY "PH.D.'S"!

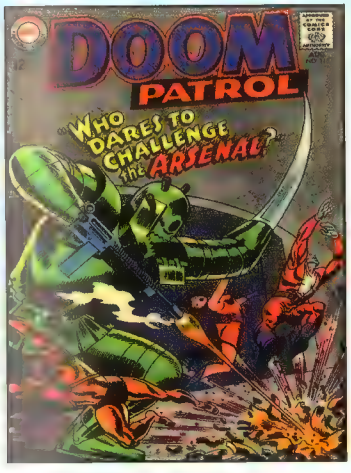
Doom Patrol #107 (Nov 1966)

DOOM PATROL
THE DOOM PATROL IS DEAD—AND THEY SACRIFICED THEMSELVES FOR ME!
STARRING THE SUPER FREAKNIKS...
ROBOTMAN, ELASTI-GIRL
HERE'S WHAT LIES AT THE END OF THE TRAIL WHEN BEAST BOY BECOMES... "KID DISASTER!"

Doom Patrol #108 (Dec 1966)

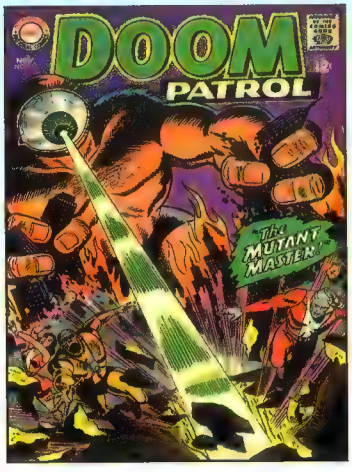

DOOM PATROL
THE FIGHT YOU NEVER EXPECTED TO SEE!
STEVE—LARRY! STOP THAT SILLY SCRAPPING! MANDRED'S BREAKING FREE!
The DP RETURNS FROM THE DEAD! BUT FOR HOW LONG—WHEN THEY MUST FACE... "MANDRED, THE EXECUTIONER!"

Doom Patrol #109 (Feb 1967)

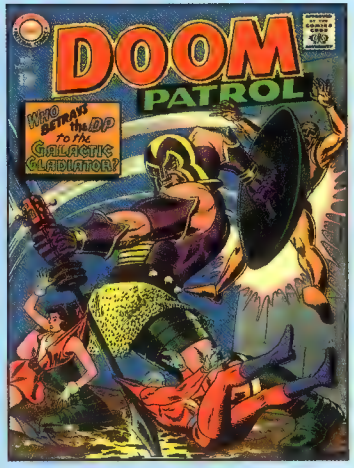


Doom Patrol #113 (Aug 1967)

Doom Patrol #114 (Sep 1967)



Doom Patrol #115 (Nov 1967)

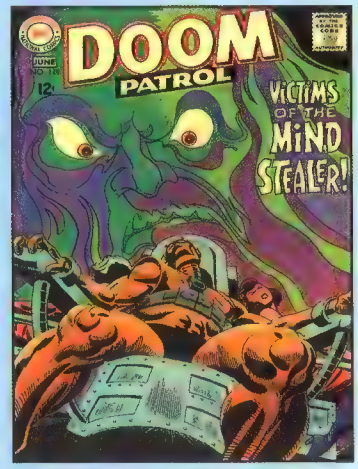


Doom Patrol #116 (Dec 1967)

DOOM
PATROL
THE DP HAS FLOWN! THE CHIEF IS ALONE IN THE NEST! AND CIRCLING ABOVE, WAITING FOR THE KILL, IS... The BLACK VULTURE!
YOU WANTED TO RUN THE WHOLE SHOW, CHIEF? OKAY—THE DP IS FINISHED—AND YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN!

Doom Patrol #117 (Feb 1968)

Doom Patrol #118 (Mar/Apr 1968)



Doom Patrol #119 (May/Jun 1968)

Doom Patrol #120 (Jul/Aug 1968)

Doom Patrol #121 (Sep/Oct 1968)

Doom Patrol #122 (Feb 1973)

Doom Patrol #123 (Mar/Apr 1973)

THE WORLD'S MOST BIZARRE HEROES
DOOM
PATROL
ROBOT MAN
ELASTI-GIRL
NEGATIVE MAN
THE CHIEF
I NOW KNOW WHICH OF YOU IS THE SABOTEUR, SENT HERE TO DESTROY OUR TEAM—AND I MUST KILL YOU!

Doom Patrol #124 (Jun/Jul 1973)

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MEMO

From: Gary M. Carter, Editor
To: CBM Market Report Readers
Subject: Special Announcement

BEGINNING NEXT ISSUE, CBM will be publishing a new and expanded Market Report and Market Analysis section. Our new features will include:

- **CBM MarketWatch**, a monthly report of confirmed sales using nationally known mail order dealers, auctions houses, and conventions as the primary source. The report will also provide a comparison of these sales to present *Price Guide* values.
- **CBM MarketMemorandum**, a monthly report that includes market analysis, market opinion, a market summary, and even some predictions!
- **PLUS Expanded Market Reports** from dealers and collectors all over the world, including—Michael Naiman, Matt Schiffman, Ted Hake, Tony Starks, Mark Wilson, Harley Yee, Jon Berk, Vincent Zurzolo, Shawn Hamilton, Ted Van Liew, Steve Fishler, Richard Evans, Dan Greenhalgh, Robert Rogovin, Ron Pussell, Gary Dolgoff, Joe Vereneault, Michael Goldman, Alan Bahr, Bob Beerbohm, John Chruscinski, Michael Dice, Rob Hughes, Jamie Graham, Jef Hinds, Jamie Newbold, Joel Thingvall, Jon McClure, Robert Roter, Mark Haspel, Rory Root, Sam Frazer, Scott McAdam, Rick Lowell, Cliff Wiener, Chris Jackson, Conrad Eschenberg, Dan Fogel, Tom Horvitz, Steve Wyatt, Dave Alexander, Dave Smith, Greg Pharis, Dave Grisez, Jason Ewert, Joe McGuckin, and John Pires.

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CBM... *the* source for marketplace information!

The Doom Patrol

Continued from page 29

Xavier, in the case of the X-Men) as the leader of both teams strains (okay, breaks) the limits of coincidence. But if Drake wondered whether Stan Lee knew about his new creation before it saw print, it didn't stop him from making a remarkable switch some five years later. As the Doom Patrol was in the process of being canceled in 1968, Drake went to Lee and proposed that they start their own company. Lee said that he was happy where he was, with the little empire that Marvel had become. But he suggested that Drake write some stories for Marvel, and before long, Arnold Drake became the writer of... the X-Men!

HEY! Here comes a DOUBLE-BARRELED
BLAST!
ANOTHER ZINGIN', SWINGIN', ADVENTURE IN OUR OWN GREAT MAGAZINE--AND ALL OF US--STRETCH LADY, GAUZE FACE, BIG DADDY AND--BEST OF ALL--LOVABLE ME--MAKE A GUEST-STAR APPEARANCE IN THAT FAIRLY GOOD OTHER MAG--
CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN!
ON SALE DECEMBER 2ND! MISS IT AND YOU'LL KILL YOURSELF! AND WE HATE TO LOSE READERS--EVEN YOU! 'NUFF SAID!
(SIGNED) RUSTY!
SUPERMAN DC NATIONAL COMICS

The Doom Patrol and the Challengers of the Unknown made guest appearances in each other's magazines. The two DC teams quarreled and complained in every other panel, just like their Marvel Comics' counterparts.

Who better to pen the adventures of a group of "super freaks" than the man who had done just that for the competition? "I may have been the first writer to work for Marvel and DC at the same time, because there was an understanding at DC... you weren't permitted to do that," says Drake. Arnold continued writing the X-Men for less than two years after which he moved on to other projects.

Off and Running

The team's debut in *My Greatest Adventure* #80 also featured their first go-round with General Immortus, who is an old enemy of the Chief's. After the team succeeds in defeating Immortus, he appears to die when a spaceship that has crash-landed blows up.

In *My Greatest Adventure* #82 we see the Chief for the first time, although his true identity is still kept under wraps. Bruno Premiani drew a superb cover for this issue, depicting Robotman clinging to a "thermal unit" that is so hot it's actually melting his metal body.

The uneasy relationship between the Doom Patrol and the general public is demonstrated in an exchange between Larry Trainor and a man on the street in *My Greatest Adventure* #83. After preventing a disturbed man from blowing up a tank of natural gas, the man on the street says to Trainor, "Nice work, Doom Patrol! Sure good to have you fabulous freaks around!" Larry replies, "Thanks for the compliment, buddy! But we're human, you know!" When the team is out there saving John Q. Public's neck, most people seem to reluctantly accept their presence. But the public's fear of something they don't understand becomes a recurring theme in the pages of the Doom Patrol.

It Didn't Take Long

Six issues, to be precise. *My Greatest Adventure* was re-named *The Doom Patrol* with issue #86, but strangely, this fact went unannounced on the cover. It wasn't until more than halfway through the issue, in the letter column, that the name change was discussed. DC obviously had great confidence in the future of the Doom Patrol, which was well on the way to putting *My Greatest Adventure* "into the black." However, DC didn't share sales and profit information with its writers. "That was all part of their not wanting us to feel too much a part of the organization," says Arnold Drake.

Doom Patrol #86 was significant for another reason: It featured the introduction of the Brotherhood of Evil, the most dangerous (and most enduring) enemies of the Doom Patrol. The Brotherhood was made up of The Brain, a disembodied, uh, brain, encased in liquid; Monsieur Mallah, a super-intelligent (and super-strong) ape; and the beautiful Madame Rouge, a clever and often deadly woman. (Some have speculated about the origin of the name Madame Rouge as it is used in the classic top 40 hit *Love Potion* #9.) In this first clash of

the two groups, a Mr. Morden steals an old invention of the Chief's, a huge robot named "Rog." Morden wreaks havoc as he pilots the robot, destroying bridges, oil derricks, etc. The Doom Patrol arrives and fights Rog to a standstill, after which Morden flies to Paris to meet with the Brotherhood of Evil.

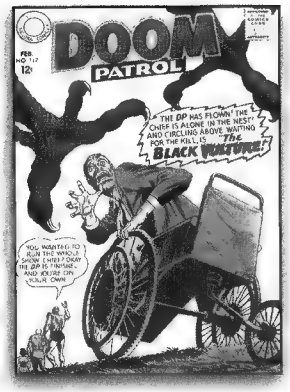
Morden is made a member after he offers the robot as a kind of "initiation fee," and he and Mallah fly to New York. Using the giant robot, they attempt to steal the Statue of Liberty, but the Doom Patrol defeats them in battle. Oddly, as Mallah and Morden escape by boat, Rita, as Elasti-Girl, doesn't stop them, despite being giant-size at the time, and despite being almost right on top of them. She could easily have picked up their boat, preventing their escape.

The story ends with Rita expressing her concern for Larry, who accidentally kept Negative Man outside his body too long. It's obvious that she cares for him, but he believes she would be appalled and disgusted if she knew his "grim secret."

That "secret" is revealed in *DP* #87: Larry's ugly! Actually, with his bandages removed, his head is sort of transparent. His skin and blond hair are there, but his skull is also visible. "Yes—I'm radio-active—the result of having flown that experimental plane through a radio-active belt in the ionosphere!" Toward the end of the story, Rita tells Larry, "Now I—I mean, we, can show you, it doesn't matter to us!"

The Chief's story is finally told in *DP* #88 (June 1964). His name is Niles Caulder, and he has quite a history with General Immortus. It seems that, when Caulder was a young man, Immortus funded Caulder's scientific research. Caulder didn't know it was Immortus who was providing the money, nor was he aware of Immortus' true motive: to get Caulder to come up with more of the serum that made Immortus immortal.

To control Caulder, Immortus had a bomb implanted in Caulder's chest, a bomb that only Immortus could safely disarm or remove. After tricking Immortus into shooting him, Caulder had his assistant perform surgery to remove the bomb, but Caulder was on the table too long. Although the bomb was removed, Caulder lost the use of his legs and wound up in a wheelchair.



ROBOTMAN
NEGATIVE MAN
DOOM PATROL
NEW!
NOW THAT YOU'RE TRAPPED IN MY COCOON, MY DEADLY BEES WILL FINISH THE JOB!
MEET BEAST-BOY
THE WILDEST, WEIRDEST TEEN TORNADO IN COMICS HISTORY! SEE HIM TRY TO BLAST HIS WAY ONTO THE TEAM!
PLUS
CRAWLING KILLERS!
THE FANTASTIC BUG MAN
AND HIS INCREDIBLE INSECT ARMY!

The Black Vulture swoops in on the Chief on the cover of Doom Patrol #117 (Feb 1968).

Reminiscent of many Batman villains of the 1950s, the Doom Patrol's insect nemesis "The Bug Man" (issue #99, Nov 1965, ABOVE) used insect and spider-shaped robots to work his fiendish plots and overcome the world's strangest heroes.

Another X-Men Connection

The LOC in issue #90 contained a letter from none other than Denver, Colorado's own Dave Cockrum, who, years later, would become the artist on the X-Men when that team was "revised" in 1975. His letter here was a humorous way of encouraging the Doom Patrol brain-trust that it was time for new uniforms. He wrote the letter as though it was from Rita Farr: "Why, oh, why won't you let us have a new uniform, one that is bright and colorful? I know there are many readers who agree… only today, I spoke to Dave Cockrum, who is being good enough to forward this note to you, and he showed me his designs which I thought were simply divine."

Thanks to the miracle of publishing schedules, Cockrum had already gotten his wish by the time the letter saw print. Negative Man and Elasti-Girl got new red and white uniforms in issue #89.

As time went on, other villains made appearances in the Doom Patrol universe. Issue #90 saw the debut of Gargaux, an alien who invades earth. Issue #92 featured Dr. Tyme, who can slow down time using his "4-X beam." And the Animal-Vegetable-Mineral Man, who had first appeared in #89, pops up again in #95 to slap the Patrol around.

Issue #91 also featured the introduction of Steve Dayton, a psychology professor who is also "the world's fifth richest man." (How he managed that on a teacher's salary is anyone's guess.) Dayton is a superhero called Mento, and he uses a special helmet to give himself psychokinetic powers. He immediately takes a shine to Elasti-Girl, and the relationship grows as time goes on. Their romance eventually results in their marriage in issue #104.

Dayton initially resents the Doom Patrol, a feeling that is very much reciprocated by Larry and Cliff. Dayton sees the team as taking too much of Rita's time, and the guys see Dayton as a threat to the stability of their Doom Patrol "family." In issue #97, Mento asks to join the Doom Patrol but is rejected, due at least in part to Rita's thinking his being in the team would foul things up.

By now, the names Bruno Premiani and Arnold Drake are appearing on the opening page of the book, but inconsistently. Their credit appears in issue #96, but not in #98, for example.

The sinister secret of Dr. Tyme (PICTURED AT LEFT) is revealed in Doom Patrol #92 (Dec 1964).

The Doom Patrol

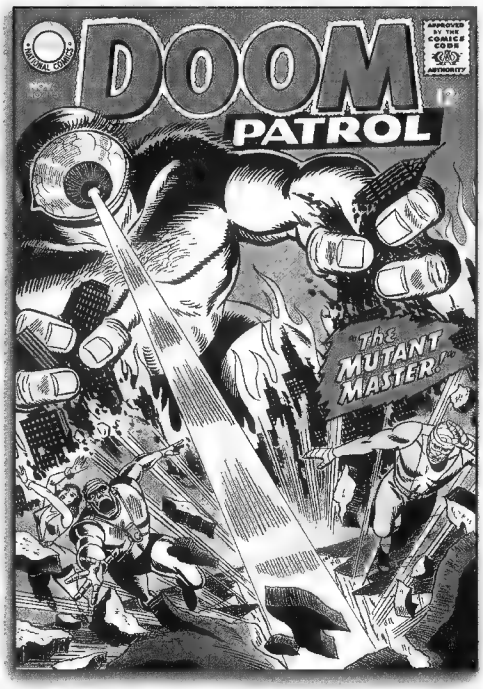
Thanks to Murray Ward for his help, and for his Official Doom Patrol Index; Lou Mougin, for his willingness to share information; and Arnold Drake for... well, you know.

The Youth Angle

Issue #99 saw the first appearance of Gar Logan, alias "Beast Boy," a pre-teen with green skin and hair who can transform himself into any animal. He acquired this ability when his father, a medical researcher, transformed Gar into a green monkey to save the boy's life. (He was suffering from a rare disease, of course!) After he recovered, he kept the green color and found he could transform himself into any animal he pleased. His parents died not long after this, leaving him a ward of Nicolas Galtry, who is a devious and evil man.

Beast Boy has a chip on his shoulder and a mouth to match, and he and Mento take an instant dislike to one another. They do, however, develop an odd sort of kinship as time goes on, since they're both "on the outside looking in" when it comes to the Doom Patrol. (Although Beast Boy is accepted into the team on a trial basis in issue #99.)

The Doom Patrol battles a variety of adversaries as the months go by, but none are as persistently annoying (or as deadly) as the Brotherhood of Evil. The super-villains even manage to wreck (or at least delay) Elasti-Girl's marriage to Mento in issue #104, as Madame Rouge (who is a "shape-changer") impersonates Mento and attacks the Patrol. The Chief figures things out, and Rita and Steve finally take their vows as the Teen Titans and the Justice League look on.



Doom Patrol #115 (Nov 1967) is considered by many collectors to have the most compelling cover of the run.

The Brotherhood returns in issues #108 through 110, capturing then apparently killing Elasti-Girl, Robotman, Negative Man and Mento. Beast Boy brings his dead teammates back to the Chief, who revives them due to someone having messed with the Brotherhood's murder weapon. It turns out to have been Madame Rouge herself, who seems to have a thing for the Chief. Meanwhile, Rita and Steve Dayton finally succeed in adopting Gar Logan.

A tug of war now ensues between the Brain and the Chief for control of Madame Rouge's destiny. The Chief is trying to rehabilitate her by using a device that is supposed to "reverse" her thought patterns, while the Brain is using something similar to try to keep her evil. It all comes to a head in issue #115, when Madame Rouge actually splits into two separate beings. In the resulting battle, her "evil self" is destroyed, and she becomes an ally of the Doom Patrol in the following issue.

In issue #118, the Brain tries to force the Doom Patrol to hand over Madame Rouge. He does this by having Videx, a villain with power over light, try to destroy the Patrol. They defeat him, but they don't fare as well against their next foe in issue #119. The Yaramishi Rama Yogi gets inside the Doom Patrol's heads and nearly causes them to kill one another before they wise up and mop the floor with Yogi and his lackeys.

In the process, though, the Yogi manages to undo the Chief's reforming of Madame Rouge, who turns back to evil and vows to destroy the Chief.

Issue 120, containing as it did a story about the Patrol's battling a space-villain named The Wrecker, gave no hint of what was to come in the next issue.

Radical Decision

The *Doom Patrol* #121 (September/ October 1968) opens with Madame Rouge apparently killing her former partners-in-crime, the Brotherhood of Evil. She then attacks the Doom Patrol, who, in order to protect innocent bystanders, pull out of the headquarters in Midway City and travel to the team's emergency island base.

Madame Rouge and her new associate, Captain Zahl, track the team to the island. Zahl is an old enemy of the Chief's, and a former Nazi. After immobilizing the Doom Patrol, Zahl gives them a choice: either he blows up a small fishing village, which would kill the fourteen people who live there... or he blows up the island, which would wipe out the Doom Patrol. Heroes to the end, the Doom Patrol choose the latter, and Zahl detonates the bomb. Rita, Cliff, Larry and the Chief are killed in the explosion.

The cover of this issue was drawn by Joe Orlando, and it's unlike anything that had come before in the title. The four heroes are shown in a moody nighttime scene in a graveyard, standing in front of gravestones with their names on them. The cover copy reads "Is this the beginning of the end of the Doom Patrol... You decide!"

The destruction of a superhero team was unheard of in 1968. For DC to have taken such a radical step must have meant that sales on the book had tailed off significantly. "The book had lost some ground, although I don't know exactly what the numbers were," says Arnold Drake. "Part of the thinking was that it's a good idea to tell the readers 'there are no superheroes.' All superheroes can die—death really is a part of life."

Sadly, Drake was not consulted on the decision to kill the Doom Patrol. "What nobody bothered to do was to call in the writer and say 'Let's try to figure out why the book isn't doing well.' I was called in only at the point where they said 'We're

probably going to kill the book within the next three issues. That was it. They had not said all along 'We've got a problem here, what can we do about it?' I don't know what we would have done about it, because I don't know what the problem was.

"I thought we had a good product, and I was sorry to see it go."

Drake was already writing the *X-Men* title over at Marvel when the Doom Patrol met their untimely end. When his tenure as X-scribe was finished, he moved on to new projects. These did not, however, include the "revival" of the Doom Patrol in the pages of DC's *Showcase* in 1977 in which we discover that Robotman somehow survived the explosion on the island, washing up on a beach at the feet of... Will Magnus of Metal Men fame. And there's also the interesting and little-discussed crossovers with The Challengers of the Unknown... but both of those are stories for another time and place. Nor did Drake's subsequent work include the second *Doom Patrol* comic book, launched by DC in 1987.

There were three more "issues" of the Doom Patrol, but they weren't published until 1973. *Doom Patrol* #122, 123 and 124 were merely reprints of original Doom Patrol issues, and they signaled the end of one of the most off-beat teams in comic book history.

I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE! YOU MAY KISS THE BRIDE!
WHERE'S THAT CLARK KENT? HE WAS SUPPOSED TO COVER THIS STORY FOR "THE DAILY PLANET!"
MAN--LIKE THIS WEDDING SWINGS BETTER THAN A GRADUATION GIG AT BENEDICT ARNOLD HIGH!
GREAT ZEUS, WHAT A KISS!

A Lasting Legacy

Arnold Drake's creation may not have dealt with the gritty world of the streets the way Neal Adams' Green Lantern/Green Arrow series did. But Drake, Premiani, Boltinoff and Brown assured the Doom Patrol of an honored place in comic book history by presenting heroes that were human as well as heroic. Real human struggles like jealousy, loneliness and anger were explored in the context of a group of people who grew to love and care for one another.

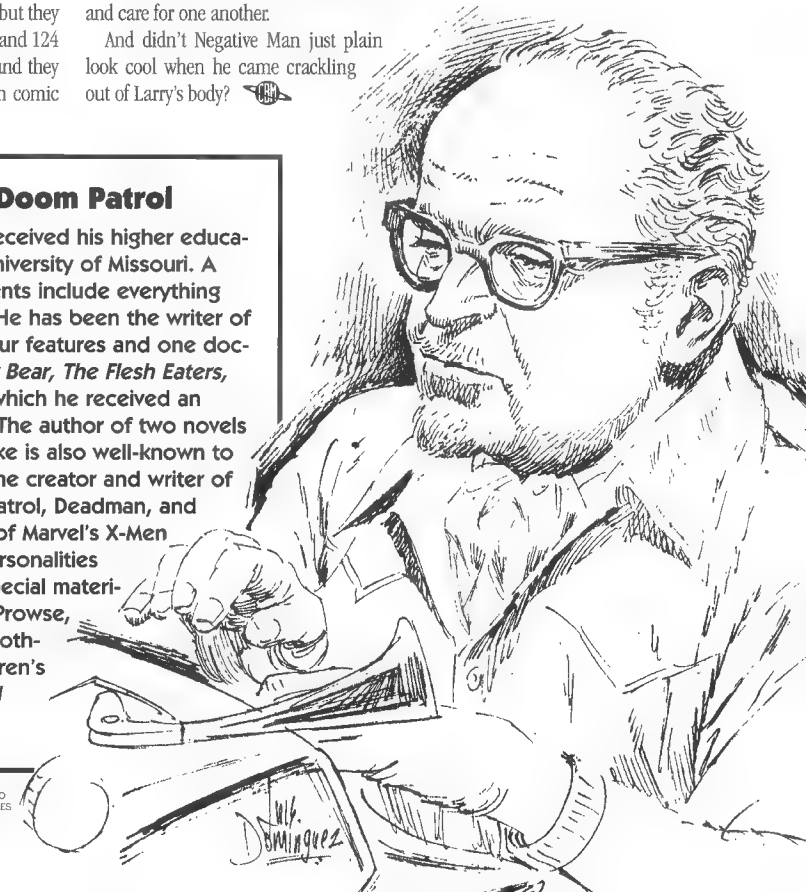
And didn't Negative Man just plain look cool when he came crackling out of Larry's body?

JLA and Teen Titan stars make cameo appearances in Doom Patrol #104 (Jun 1966).

The Man behind the Doom Patrol

Born in the Big Apple, Arnold Drake received his higher education at New York University and the University of Missouri. A writer of great versatility, his assignments include everything from theater to writing comic books. He has been the writer of original stories and screenplays for four features and one documentary, including *Who Killed Teddy Bear, The Flesh Eaters,* and *Big Deal on Madonna Street,* for which he received an Academy Award nomination in 1959. The author of two novels and two works of non-fiction, Mr. Drake is also well-known to millions of comic book collectors as the creator and writer of many DC characters including Doom Patrol, Deadman, and Stanley and his Monster... and writer of Marvel's X-Men

Mr. Drake is no stranger to stage personalities either, having prepared scripts and special material for Xavier Cugat, Abbe Lane, Juliet Prowse, Jan Murray, and Frankie Laine, among others. He is also the author of two children's musicals entitled *Smart Alex* and *You'll Never Get It Off the Ground.*



THE PORTRAIT OF ARNOLD DRAKE AT RIGHT IS BY THE LEGENDARY LUIS DOMINGUEZ WHO WORKED AT DC AND WESTERN DURING THE SILVER AGE AND BRONZE AGE ON SUCH TITLES AS *HOUSE OF MYSTERY, HOUSE OF SECRETS, BORIS KARLOFF* AND *TWILIGHT ZONE*

The Neal Adams' X-Men

by J. C. Vaughn

When the new X-Men rolled into town with *Giant Size X-Men* #1 and then *X-Men* #94, they were following a trail blazed more by Roy Thomas and Neal Adams than by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. And with good reason. Like his ground-breaking work at DC (see *CBM* #40 or #56), Adams' work on The X-Men was short on tenure but long on impact. His mere nine issues forever altered the way this band of mutants would be portrayed throughout the Marvel Universe and in the entire post-reprint era.

Since X-Men sales were so low that the series went into reprints beginning with *X-Men* #67 (and lasting through #93), it's hard to suggest that Adams' work made the impression with readers that it did on other titles. Clearly his run on The Avengers (with pretty much the same team—Thomas writing, Adams penciling and Tom Palmer inking) or many of his DC efforts were better known to their readership. Its effect on other comic book creators, though, particularly many of those who would follow him on the title, is difficult to overstate.

Think about everything that was packed into those few issues: The Living Monolith. Larry Trask. The most sinister interpretation of the Sentinels prior to Alex Ross' work in Marvel. The apparent end of the Sentinels. Havoc's costume. The introduction of Sauron. The journey to the Savage Land. Ka-zar. And of course Magneto and about as much romantic tension as one could cram into a superhero book. The depiction of the plight and feelings of this group of permanent outsiders was infused with the same real-world sensibilities that Adams brought to Green Lantern. It was no longer enough to allude to the issues. Adams made The X-Men a visual representation of dynamic angst, turmoil and conflict of the day.

Thomas' stories and Adams' visuals were strongly rooted in the struggles of idealism against pragmatism, nobility versus self-interest, and understanding contrasted against hate. They were both timeless and yet themes of the times. The effects of the work would be far reaching in the X-books to come. Though Adams' last issue was the second-to-last issue of new material in the book for years, plot elements from his run became the undercurrent for what Len Wein (and then Chris Claremont) and Dave Cockrum cooked up when the title was jolted back into the realm of the new.

When the later team of Chris Claremont, John Byrne and Terry Austin was at the height of their long run, The X-Men was again the story of understanding contrasted against hate with contemporary dialogue and strong, compelling visuals. If those new X-Men were a house, they were a house built on a strong foundation.

WRITER CREDITS: #56-58, 60-63 written by Roy Thomas; #59 written by Roy Thomas, co-plot by Chris Claremont; #65 written by Dennis O'Neil. ARTIST CREDITS: #56-63, 65 pencils by Neal Adams; inks/colors by Tom Palmer. STORY TITLES: #56 "What is the Power?"; #57 "The Sentinels Live"; #58 "Mission... Murder"; #59 "Do or Die, Baby"; #60 "In the Shadow of... Sauron"; #61 "Monsters Also Weep"; #62 "Strangers in a Savage Land"; #63 "War in the World Below"; #65 "Before I'd Be A Slave".

X-MEN

Continued from page 36

science that would ultimately lead them away from the path of evil after an encounter with the alien Stranger in #11. Revelations about their ties to the Master of Magnetism (their biological father, although Magneto himself was oblivious to that fact at this time) still lay ahead, but for now, the stage was set for an epic saga, pitting good mutants against their evil kin.

Following the introduction of both the X-Men and their greatest enemy, Magneto, the team is sent by Xavier to contact other potentially evil mutants, the Vanisher (issue #2), and the Blob (issue #3). Xavier's stern taskmaster role was a bit much to take at times, but doubtless another familiar facet of the series for young readers. As Xavier himself explained, the threats the X-Men faced demanded the utmost concentration and dedication ("Silence! No talking until I conclude this presentation! Give yourself one demerit, Iceman!"). The Brotherhood itself debuts in #4, and after the Professor cagily pretends to lose his psychic abilities, the teen heroes are left to face Magneto alone in #5, rescuing the fallen Angel and learning of their leader's ruse when he announces that this mission was their "final exam." "You've all passed with flying colors! You've proven you can think and act for yourselves!! Your training period is over!! Congratulations, my X-Men!!"

An obligatory meeting with the Sub-Mariner in #6 brings the X-Men face-to-face with the already infamous FF foe, while graduation ceremonies are a lighter touch to open #7. At this point, other elements of the mythos were swiftly established during the rest of the Lee & Kirby period. Selecting Cyclops to act as the new leader of the team, Professor X introduces the grim-faced youth and readers to Cerebro, the artificial intelligence utilized by Professor X to seek out other mutants. In #8, which introduces the "uncanny threat of Unus the Untouchable" (later to meet a tragic fate when his powers

There's no style like the Neal Adams' style... as the covers of X-Men #56 (May 1969) and #58 (Jul 1969) aptly demonstrate. Issue #58 introduced the villain Havok near the end of the Bronze Age.

THERE HE IS! I'VE FOUND HIM!! X-MEN, ATTACK!!
WRONG, YOU FLYING FOOL! IT IS I, MAGNETO, WHO HAVE FOUND YOU!
SEE HOW EASILY I CAN STOP YOUR FLIGHT BY MAGNETICALLY HURLING EVERY NEARBY OBJECT WHICH IS NOT BOLTED DOWN!
21

Magneto demonstrates his mastery over all things metal in the first X-Men adventure. Art by Jack Kirby and Paul Reinman.

accelerate beyond control, a bitter end foreshadowed in this debut), Scott, shouldering the burden alone following Professor X's departure to hunt the enigmatic Lucifer, encourages Bobby to refine his icy form from a snow-like shape to the more familiar multi-faceted ice coating. Also in #8, readers learned for the first time that Scott's longing for Jean was echoed by her own secret desire. By #9 she too was pining away like a love-sick schoolgirl… which she was, after all ("If only I could comfort you with my arms… my lips… but I know I mustn't! As our acting leader, you've no time for thoughts of… romance!"). The two would remain convinced of each other's disinterest for some time; Stan's glee at prolonging the tension of unrequited love would be played to maximum effect here.

Issue #9 also brought the X-Men toe-to-toe with the Avengers in a classic variation on the "Marvel heroes fighting each other" theme as the Professor confronts Lucifer, the man responsible for his crippled condition. Who was this purple-clad menace? That question would wait for some time, but he would later turn out to be an alien first encountered by Xavier in Tibet; Lucifer dropped a stone block on the Professor's legs in that initial battle.

If This Be a Legend!

The next half year of issues (#10-16) were a rapid-fire succession of character debuts that would set the stage for hundreds of Marvel Universe tales in the next thirty-five years. Chafing at the bit to find something to do in #10, the X-Men investigate reports of an Antarctic wild man and find Ka-Zar, Lord of the Jungle. Together with his "blood brother," the sabre-toothed tiger, Zabu, Ka-Zar rules the Savage Land, a Conan Doyle-esque Lost World populated by dinosaurs, hostile tribesmen, and the potential for exciting adventures galore. "Stronger than mastodon! Stronger than giant boar! Mighty is Ka-Zar… Lord of the Jungle!" Upcoming issues of *Daredevil*, among others, would further explore and develop the Savage Land and its jungle lord.

In the following issue, the X-Men had their last encounter with Magneto and the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants for some time. A bizarre and powerful figure known only as the Stranger arrives on Earth to study mutantkind, and takes the helpless X-foe and his fawning sidekick, the Toad, back to the nether reaches of space when he departs. Professor X believes the threat of the Brotherhood is finally at an end, particularly

I SAY FORGET THE X-MEN! WE ESCAPED THEM ONCE… THEY WON'T BOTHER US AGAIN!
I AGREE WITH MY BROTHER, QUICKSILVER! WE SHOULD…
QUIET! REMEMBER YOUR PLACE!! NOT EVEN THE SCARLET WITCH NOR QUICKSILVER CAN DICTATE TO MAGNETO! I ALONE MAKE THE DECISIONS FOR OUR BAND!

The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants plots more deviltry as the Scarlet Witch and Quicksilver continue to rebel against Magneto in X-Men #5 (May 1964). Art by Kirby & Reinman.

UNCANNY X-MEN had become the trendsetter of comics by the end of the '70s. It started many elements of today's collecting, which even affected this industry's current state. This revived title started the trend of brand-new comics being 'hot' as immediate collectibles. I can still remember shaking my head at the $4 price tag of *X-Men* #94 (only 25¢ cover price) about a year after it hit the stands. Events like the death of lead character Jean Grey in issue #137 (who was revived a decade later) caused hoarding of multiple copies… and for a story point—not a first issue. A revival of team books featuring younger characters began, especially with a strong female cast, the best being DC's *Teen Titans*. The artist as superstar (with many later becoming artist-hyphenated-writers to be followed by fans to whichever title they shift to) began here for the modern era, with most future penciling stars like Art Adams and Jim Lee having their start on this very title.

All of the former trends would magnify into the 1980s and '90s. Some of these actually ended up being beneficial to the state of the industry today. With others, we had to learn our lessons.

Now this was a far cry from the X-team's status at the beginning of that decade. After a last flash of glory with nine Neal Adams issues (*X-Men* #56-63, 65), the series was canceled with a decent wrap-up, Professor X's return from the 'dead' (an impostor died in his place) in #65 and his recovery in issue # 66, March 1970 cover date. From that time through the beginning of the reprint era with #67 (December 1970), there were no X-Men appearances that I could locate except for their arch-foe Magneto's storyline beginning in Jack Kirby's last full *Fantastic Four* issue (#102) and concluding with John Romita, Sr. (#104) in late 1970. In fact, Magneto was featured in more issues and titles then any of the other X-heroes during this unpublished and reprint period. I guess that a great villain was hard not to put in use even when his main rivals were out of the way.

Solo X-Men

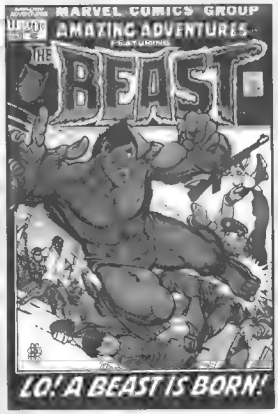
The first X-Man to have appeared back in print is Iceman with the January 1971 issue of *Amazing Spider-Man* (#92) in a traditional Marvel story line of a misunderstanding (he was led to believe that good ol' Spidey might have killed Captain Stacy and be bullying poor Gwen), leading the two heroes to beat each other up-until they figured the situation out. The only continuity clue was a bit of Iceman's dialog to himself that he's "...been out of action with the X-Men long enough!" Stan Lee must have just picked Iceman to go against Spidey, the teenage hero, the same way he had the 'baby' of the X-Men in past team-ups with the youngest Fantastic Four, the Human Torch. This was not as clever a match though.

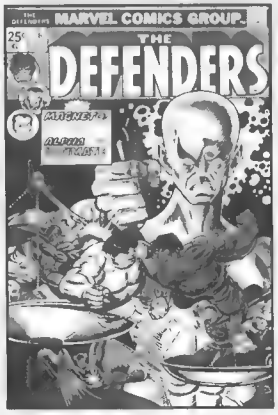
The next X appearance was a major continuity run in *Amazing Adventures'* Beast series #11-17 (March 1972-March 1973). This starred the X-Men's Hank McCoy, the Beast off on his own (with a Team flashback in their Adams' period costumes). But here was an X-Men spin-off with a twist. Following the early 1970's Monster trend with the classic monsters like Dracula, werewolf and such, they also brushed off some old characters for retooling like the early Kirby monster, the Living Colossus, as it and John Jameson from *Amazing Spider-Man* as Man-Wolf. I'm sure that this was part of that strategy. Thus, the Beast's mutant experiments which by 'accident' genetically altered his own mutant agility further to become first the gray then the blue furred beast. Having the Beast as a real beast had a certain logic. I guess we

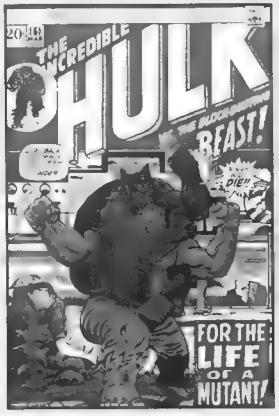
(Continued on page 54)

X-Men… The Lost Years!

by Rich Donnelly







The Beast breaks away from his old teammates in Amazing Adventures #11 (Mar 1972); Prof. X appears on the cover of Defenders #16 (Oct 1974); and the Incredible Hulk #61 (Mar 1973) continues the Beast saga with the mutant Mimic.

when the Scarlet Witch and Quicksilver resolve to return home, satisfied that they have paid their debt to Magneto and no longer must serve his evil ends. Their story, however, was only just beginning, and they soon became part of an all-new Avengers line-up led by the recently revived Captain America, thus further weaving the varied strands of the Marvel Universe together in an ever-growing (and more or less consistent) fictional tapestry.

By this time, Kirby stepped back from regularly penciling the mutant mayhem, instead providing layouts for a rotating team of artists, including Alex Toth and new regular penciler Jay Gavin, who would stay with the title for several months, providing a much-needed feeling of continuity as the X-Men embarked on their first two multi-part stories. In #12 and #13, the origins of Professor Xavier were partially revealed in a two-part tale that also introduced the unstoppable Juggernaut. In reality Cain Marko, Xavier's cruel step-brother ("he had no super-power then… nothing but an aura of sheer cruelty, and thinly disguised evil!"), the helmeted heavy, was given superpowers by a gem discovered in the lost temple of Cyttorak when both brothers were serving in Korea. Juggernaut was the first adversary to send the entire team to sick beds following a harrowing battle that ended when Xavier succeeded in shutting down his step-brother's mind. The Juggernaut learned from that encounter, and often returned to menace Professor X and his students with his helmet now welded shut to prevent similar mental attacks. With Xavier's murky background starting to surface, it would seem that the excitement of the early days was starting to level off. Nothing could be further from the truth.

OKAY, CHARLIE! I GOT HIS SPECS! NOW TAKE A LOOK AND--WHAT'S THAT?!!
BACK! STAND BACK! KEEP AWAY FROM ME, IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIVES! I TRIED TO WARN YOU!
NOW I GOT IT, HE'S ONE OF THE X-MEN--HE MUST BE THE MUTANT CALLED CYCLOPS!!
MY MIGHTY SENTINELS ARE EQUIPPED WITH THE MOST COMPLEX MECHANICAL THINKING APPARATUS EVER CONSTRUCTED!
AND THEY POSSESS, IN ADDITION TO THEIR OWN INCALCULABLE STRENGTH, MANY HIDDEN WEAPONS, WITH WHICH TO SERVE MANKIND!
SECTION LEADER, STEP FORWARD! YOU WILL DEMONSTRATE HOW FAITHFULLY YOU OBEY MY EVERY COMMAND...!

X-Men #14 (Nov 1965, ABOVE) featured the first appearance of the sinister Sentinels. Cyclops runs afoul of the police in issue #11 (May 1965, LEFT).

Enter: The Sentinels!

In the November 1965 issue (#14), which carried a proud "now on sale monthly!" blurb on the cover, a threat was introduced that would strike terror into the hearts of mutants everywhere, becoming one of the few unparalleled horrors in the Marvel

Early issues spotlighted the playful rough-housing that characterized other Lee & Kirby teams. The Beast/Iceman rivalry mirrored the Thing/Torch dynamic.

HOLD STILL, ANGEL! I'LL HAVE THAT MELTED IN NO TIME!
EASY, CYCLOPS! JUST MELT THE ICE! LEAVE THE WING, HUH?
TOO BAD YOU WEREN'T AS GOOD WITH THAT BLAMED ICE OF YOURS AGAINST THE VANISHER AS YOU ARE AGAINST US!
COME TO ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY, STUDENTS! I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR CHILDISH ANTICS! TURN AND FACE ME...ALL OF YOU!

should be lucky that they didn't choose Iceman and make him an Abominable Snowman or something worse.

This series did tie into the X-Men team with farewell flashback in the first issue and a present time

Marvel Tales #73 (Nov 1977) plugs Iceman's Champions.

cameo in the second issue with Marvel Girl and the Professor sensing mentally that Hank was having problems. Here again, the X-(Wo)man appeared in the latest costume. There would be one more X-Men cross-over in #15 with the X-gang in dispute. This sent Angel flying out to help their old team mate, and finding out about the Beast's further mutation. Coincidentally, Beast needed the help against a new flying villain, the Griffin.

In addition, old time X-Men fans did have two chances to enjoy some old X-villains in *Amazing Adventures* #13 and #15. When the Beast was asked to join the new Brotherhood of Evil Mutant- Blob, Unus the Untouchable and Mastermind, the new leader was not quite the 'mastermind' as he believed this new Beast when he answered that he had no relation to the old Beast of the X-Men. Beast surprisingly handled the two powerhouse evil mutants quite easily (in the old days it took the whole X-Men team), using their own powers to trap themselves. In *AA* #16, Beast had more difficulty handling Juggernaut, the strongest X-Villain, but he lucked out with another dimension draining the powerhouse's strength. This was the final new issue. The last issue was an origin reprint (reruns seemed to curse Marvel's mutants) with only two new framing pages.

Spidey, Avengers and the Hulk one-shots

The first time the X-Men as a team had a full story and cover appearance came with *Marvel Team-Up* #4. This was a Spider-Man story continued from *Amazing Spider-Man* #101 & #102 with Morbius the Living Vampire. Here was the first time they appeared back in their old 'student' blue and yellow uniforms. I'm sure this was done to tie them more directly into their own reprint series look, set during the time before their graduation into individual costumes. They did quickly change into civilian clothes for most of story. From this point on, the X-Men were depicted with the school costumes, unless they were in civilian clothes, which never worked as well for the angel who had to go shirtless because of his wingspan.

The Avengers with two mutant members, Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch, carried on a few X-Men plotlines with the mutant-hunting Sentinels in #103 and 104 and the savage land mutants in #105. Yet, the major X-Men story crossed in *(Continued on page 56)*

Universe from then on. The first inklings of the anti-mutant hysteria that would fuel many stories in the decades ahead were brought to light here when Bolivar Trask reveals his plans to safeguard the human race from the mutant menace. Invented to locate and exterminate mutants from the face of the Earth, Trask's robot Sentinels push the X-Men to the limits of their abilities. The mechanical monstrosities rebel against their creator (as many giant robots seem to do) and attempt to replicate themselves in a bid to dominate the world for humanity's own protection. "The only way we can protect mankind is by conquering it! For we are Sentinels!"

The X-Men valiantly battle the sinister Sentinels for three issues, their longest sustained mission to date, until Trask, realizing the error of his fanatical ways, sacrifices himself to destroy the central Sentinel brain—the Master Mold ("My own life means nothing! I'll sacrifice it gladly to undo the dread thing I've done!"). The Sentinels themselves, as well as Trask's son (not yet introduced in the Lee & Kirby period) would also return to plague the X-Men several more times. Symbols of pure, unadulterated hatred, the Sentinels and their genocidal mission would influence the lives of the X-Men for decades, culminating in one of their most celebrated adventures (the aforementioned "Days of Future Past"). Even now, the image of Sentinels flying over a dark cityscape, their cold searchlights blazing down onto helpless citizens below, remains an arresting image that can't help but give the hardiest reader a chill.

Following the Sentinel affair, the team comes home to rest in #17, only to find themselves falling into carefully-laid traps set by a shadowy figure who defeats the weakened team one by

FIRST, WE'LL MAKE SURE HE STAYS A WHILE, SO I CAN REALLY ENJOY THE FUN AND GAMES I'VE GOT PLANNED!
YOU EXPECT THAT LITTLE CHUNK OF ICE TO HOLD ME, SHORTY??
ALL I'VE GOTTA DO IS WIGGLE MY BIG TOE-- LIKE THIS!
N-NOBODY'S EVER DONE THAT BEFORE!
BUT I'M SOMEBODY, JUNIOR! I'M THE BLOB!

During their first confrontation in X-Men #3 (Jan 1964, page 10, panels 2 and 3) the Blob teaches the colder-than-cold Iceman a lesson in humility. Art by Jack Kirby and Paul Reinman.

The X-Men and the Avengers tussle in a classic Marvel fight scene from X-Men #9 (Jan 1965).

SAVE YOUR FLOWERY PHRASES FOR SOMEONE WHO'LL BE MORE IMPRESSED, SON! I HOLD A FEW COLLEGE DEGREES MYSELF!
NOW, GO SWALLOW ANOTHER DICTIONARY SOMEWHERE WHILE I ATTEND TO MORE URGENT MATTERS!
RELAX, YOU WORD-SLINGING WONDER! I'LL STOP YOU FROM FALLING!
A MOST OPPORTUNE GESTURE, BUT I SUGGEST YOU DIVERT YOUR ATTENTION TO THE MASS WHO SEEMS TO HAVE YOU IN HER SIGHTS!
IF I CAN JUST REACH THAT TITIAN-HAIRED [illegible] IN TIME--!
HERE'S A QUICK FREEZING ICY SWEATSHIRT FOR YOU, STRETCH! THIS'LL CRAMP YOUR STYLE REAL GOOD!
PUT ME DOWN, AVENGER! I WARN YOU--!
I HATE TO ATTACK THAT YOUNG ICEMAN-- BUT I MAY HAVE TO!
YOUNG FELLA, I HAVE A COLLECTION OF "WARNINGS" THAT WOULD MAKE YOUR EYES POP!
PERHAPS SO! BUT I'M KEEPING YOU BUSY TO ATTACK ANY OTHER X-MEN!
STAY YOUR HAND, WINGED ONE! YOUR MORTAL BLOWS ARE BUT FEATHER TOUCHES TO THOR!

Mutants Are Another Name For Merchandising!

one. The Angel's parents, visiting their son at the Westchester campus where Professor X has trained the team for all these months, encounter the mystery villain as he greets them gleefully. "Who are you??" Warren's father asks. "I? I am power—Men call me—Magneto!!"

Surely this was not the last time Magneto would attempt to settle a score with the mutant heroes, but rest assured his dastardly plans were again foiled by the hardy band of adventurers just in time for them to face yet another evil force which only the X-Men could defeat. By the end of Stan and Jack's two and a half years on the title, as with their collaboration on the *Fantastic Four*, the *Avengers*, and Stan's similar partnership with Steve Ditko on the first 38 issues of *Amazing Spider-Man*, the players and events that formed the foundation of an epic were slowly and methodically set into place. Even more mysteries were explored as future creative teams took the X-Men on a roller coaster ride of physical and emotional challenges that would define them as heroes forevermore. Their experiences were woven into one of the most complex continuity-laden sagas ever written for comics. Even Stan himself jokes frequently about needing a scorecard to keep track of who's who and what's happening in Marvel's ever-expanding X-titles. The X-Men have been disbanded, reformed, splintered into several groups, hounded, redeemed, and even led by their once arch-foe, Magneto!

The future of the X-Men, troubled though it may be in their own reality, was assured of a resounding success in our world. By the 1980s, the X-Men were Marvel's most popular characters in sales, and today, the company's sure-fire hits remain their many mutant series and spin-offs. A long-awaited live-action adaptation is rumored to be nearing production, and X-related merchandise—including books, toys, action figures, statues, and much more—never fails to fly off the shelves at toy stores and comic shops everywhere.

In their own world, the X-Men are excoriated fugitives, and regularly struggle against adversaries both internal and external to save humanity and themselves from annihilation. In ours, they are exalted heroes, one of Stan and Jack's many Marvel success stories. They have brought the message of tolerance, acceptance, and brotherhood to millions of fans while delighting all ages with rousing adventure stories.

Professor Xavier should be proud… and ten demerits to anyone who thinks otherwise.

Cain Marko seals his fate in #12 (BELOW); the Juggernaut demonstrates his incredible power in #13 (RT).

IT'S THE SACRED, LOST TEMPLE OF CYTTORAK! LEGENDS HAVE WARNED OF IT FOR CENTURIES!
NO!! DON'T TOUCH IT!! DON'T!
THAT RUBY... IT LOOKS ALIVE! THERE'S AN INSCRIPTION ON IT!!

IT TOOK ME ALL THESE YEARS TO FREE MYSELF OF THE TONS OF STONE I HAD BEEN BURIED UNDER IN KOREA.* ... BUT THE WAIT WAS WORTH IT!
BECAUSE I PLANNED THIS TRIUMPHANT MOMENT ALL THAT TIME!
SEE THE POWER OF THE JUGGERNAUT! MY BODY IS SO CHARGED WITH BOUNDLESS ENERGY THAT I EXUDE WAVES OF FORCE EVEN WHEN STANDING STILL!
HE'S SPEAKING THE TRUTH! THE SHEER AURA OF STRENGTH ABOUT HIM IS ENOUGH TO PUSH MY WHEELCHAIR BACK!
* WE SAW THE ENTIRE AWESOME SPECTACLE IN X-MEN #12... STAN.

Lost Years

Continued from page 54

issues #110 and #111 in April and May of 1973. This was the only conflict the team managed to attend with their major villain, Magneto. The Master of Magnetism had taken over the wills of the X-Men and decided to challenge the Avengers next. This was not too smart a plan. The X-Men only appeared on the first cover, in their yellow and blue outfits. This was their second new story cover shot as a team. This story followed the plot of *X-Men* #62 and #63 with Magneto's capture of the Angel. What happened to the Angel at the end became the thread of the next mutant plot.

The Hulk title strangely tied into the continuity three times during the missing X-Men continuity. First, in issue #150, timed between the first and second issues of Beast's series, the explanation of why Havok and Polaris were missing was explained. It seemed that one of those occasional Marvel love triangles was going bad between those two and the Iceman. Havok lost control and almost defrosted him. So, Havok decided to leave the team, and of course, Polaris followed to talk him back.

This seemed to be a tidy way to get the two newest members out of sight during the reprint era when they weren't around. This book could easily be overlooked because only Polaris appeared on the cover in civilian clothes. A casual reader could think her green hair to be connected to the fact the she was surrounded by bikers (did they dye hair much back then?) or perhaps due to some coloring snafu. *Hulk* #161 (guest-staring Beast) followed after his own series, the same month as his final issue which was a fill-in reprint. There, he continued his involvement with his old girlfriend from *Amazing Adventures* #16. This time it was to save a former X-Man, the Mimic. Mimic's stories had been reprinted in 1971 and 1972, and Marvel probably wanted to use the character again. Unfortunately, he died at the end, until he was revived in the 1990s. In February 1974, *Hulk* #172 was probably the most interesting because although the X-Men (showing only Cyclops, Marvel Girl and the Professor) appeared only on the last page to pick up their foe, Juggernaut, they did mention their hunt for the missing Angel. This linked back to *Avengers* #111. Also, it was a bridge to the longest X-Men guest-starring story arc to occur in the *Captain America* series.

Kidnapping mutants

After another of those misunderstanding-style fights (this time between Cap and Falcon with the mutant Banshee in *Captain America* #172, April 1974) the partners found themselves allied with the remnants of the X-Men against the 'Secret Empire.' Not only had this conspiratorial group framed Cap, but they had also been kidnapping mutants. Prof. X, with Cyclops and Marvel Girl, updated Steve and Sam along with the readers about how first Angel, then Beast, Havok & Polaris and, somehow, the Iceman were captured. All of these tied in nicely to plot threads hanging over from the *Hulk* issues and the *Avengers* title. Well, there was a little screw-up. Iceman was shown in a flashback to the last *Hulk* issue, but he wasn't in the actual issue. Anyway, the dramatic mutant moment occurred in *Captain America* #174, when we found out what the hooded conspirators were doing with the captured mutants. The readers only saw the shocked reaction of the rescuers with a dramatic caption ... "open your eyes wide and turn to the double page spread on page 22 &23!" Then the reader had to flip through two letter pages, a bullpen bulletin and an ad page before getting to the answer.

It was some answer. A single image of the captured X-Men, side by side with some of their previous foes, all unconscious, attached to a circular platform and heads covered with machinery. Professor X quickly explained that the machine was draining their 'brain energy' (I couldn't figure how it worked, but their brains' 'x-waves' energized the Empire's fraudulent spaceship's forcefield). Anyway, the last issue, *Cap* #175, really focused on Cap as he collapsed the conspiracy and unmasked Number One, the 'Secret Empire' leader, shades of Watergate.

Englehart, Siegel, Wein, and Claremont

After the secret empire mutant epic, the X-Men were noted most by their absence. The last Cap issues' letter page had announced a new X-Men project that was delayed for not being quite ready yet. The same month in *Team-up* #23, in order to work with the Human Torch, Iceman took a quick leave from the re-united *X-Men* (the still solo Beast would later pop up to join the Avengers with issue #137, after a Beast, *AA* #12, reprint once again in the previous issue) on their way for a 'secret mission'. Up until now, nearly all of these X-Men continuity stories were written by Steve Englehart with the exception of two major stories and three minor ones. (Notably, one non-continuity two-part Angel story was penned by Superman creator Jerry Siegel.) *Team-Up* #23 marked the beginning of Len Wein's involvement with the Marvel's mutant-kind. The 'secret mission' motif continued in *Defenders* #16 and #17 in September and October 1974 with Prof. X asking for their help against Magneto and the revived Brotherhood of Evil Mutants. The Professor mentioned that his X-Men were not available, being on this unmentionable mission. The X-Men leader only managed to get a small cover appearance on the second cover (Magneto landed pretty prominently on both). Also, Len Wein also introduced a mutant in the October through December, 1974 issues of the *Hulk*, called Wolverine. This shorter character was described in one word balloon as being a mutant, but he was not tied to X-Men continuity. That came later in a big way.

The bridge issue between the old and new era of the X-Men appeared in February 1975 in *Giant Size Fantastic Four* #4. The first new mutant character in continuity of the 'lost' period, Maddrox—the multiple man, introduced in a Wein story co-written by Chris Claremont. Later, Chris would become the major new X-Men developer after this, his first Marvel mutant story. This character was actually connected

to the X-Men by Prof. X arriving at the last minute to handle this lost mutant by Xavier's mental powers. Here, no mention was made in the story of the secret X-Men mission but an editorial comment mentioned a first giant size X-Men book coming out in January (which would probably would have made it a March or April cover date).

Instead, *X-Men* #93, cover dated April 1975, was the last of the reprint series, with no sign of a giant size *X-Men* book in sight. Was this another delay of a promised new X-Men series or was this another of Marvel's reprint books? During that era, I can remember reading that last issue (reprinting *X-Men* #45) at the time and being excited to find out how Cyclops was going to handle all those Avengers. I even pestered one of the early comic shop owners, Bob Sidebottom, in San Jose, California about the giant size book (he dismissed it as just a reprint book). Well, I had to wait until I read the original printing in *Avengers* #53 to find out how the reprint series ended, because the next X-Men book on the stands was not a retread.

It was, instead, a double sized, first original X-Men story under their own title. *Giant Sized X-Men* #1 was not only a new story but a new team of X-Men brought together to save the old team. These new characters had cool looks and fun costumes by Legion of Super-heroes' artist, Dave Cockrum, to put them into action. This was a big start to a new era and ended the "lost years" of the X-Men run.

Rich Donnelly has been an active reader and collector since the age of 12 (1974). Besides comics, he also collects original comic art, especially both the new and old X-Men and Marvel before their Silver Age. Rich currently works with entertainment artists, working in comics, toys, and animation at Creative Interests Agency.

LOST YEARS TIMELINE

GENERAL TIMELINE: 1. ORIGINAL SERIES ENDS - X-Men #66 (Mar 1970), series wraps up fighting Hulk with Prof. X's recovery after his return in X-Men #65, last new story with old X-Men in own title; 2. REPRINT PERIOD - X-Men #67 reprints begin, end X-Men #93 (Dec 1970/Apr 1975), new cover art #67, 69, King size-Annual #2, 73-80, 89, 92; 3. NEW X-MEN BEGIN - Giant Size X-Men #1 hits the stands in June (dated Summer 1975) containing 1st new story with new X-Men, X-Men #94 (Aug 1975) is published featuring the start of the new X-Men storyline as a regular series.

SPECIFIC TIMELINE:

Continuity: Mar 1970-Aug 1975; no new stories under own title

- Amazing Spider-Man #92 (Jan 1971) - Iceman goes after Spiderman; X-Men said to have been out of action
- Amazing Adv. #11 (Mar 1972) Beast goes solo; X-Men cameo- flashback
- Incredible Hulk #150 (Apr 1972) Polaris seeks out Havok to return to X-Men; Havok leaving X-Men flashback with Polaris & Iceman
- Amazing Adv. #12 (May 1972) Beast rejects Team; hiding since #66; concurrent X-Men cameo
- Amazing Adv. #13 (Jul 1972) Beast vs Brotherhood of Evil Mutants
- Amazing Adv. #14 (Aug 1972) Beast vs Quasimodo
- Marvel Team-Up #4 (Sep 1972) X-Men Team co-stars with Spiderman, now minus Beast; X-Men cover appearance
- Amazing Adv. #15 (Nov 1972) Angel splits with X-Men to help Beast fight Griffin; X-Men cameo
- Amazing Adv. #16 (Jan 1972) last issue of Beast series; vs Juggernaut
- Amazing Adv. #17 (Mar 1972) Beast origin reprint; emergency fill-in for Killraven
- Incredible Hulk #161 (Mar 1973) Beast and the return of the Mimic; follows Amazing Adv. storyline
- Avengers #110 (Apr 1973) Fighting Magneto, X-Men co-star, Part 1; X-Men cover appearance
- Avengers #111 (May 1973) Fighting Magneto with X-Men, Part 2
- Inc. Hulk #172 (Feb 1974) Marvel Girl, Cyclops & Prof. X pick up Juggernaut; X-Men cameo; mentions missing X-Men
- Captain America #172 (Apr 1974) Three X-Men helping Cap against Secret Empire; X-Men's longest co-starring run begins
- Captain America #173 (May 1974) Plot links into old Beast, Hulk & Avengers' Story-lines; X-Men cover appearance
- Captain America #174 (Jun 1974)
- Captain America #175 (Jul 1974) Captured X-Men and other mutants freed; letter column mention of a delayed X-Men project
- Marvel Team-Up #23 (Jul 1974) Iceman co-stars; last old X-Men Team app.; X-Men cameo; Secret Mission 1st mentioned
- Defenders #15 (Sep 1974) Prof X seeks Defenders to stop Magneto & Evil Mutants; continued from Avengers #111; X-Men said to be away on Secret Mission
- Defenders #16 (Oct 1974) Magneto last app. until restored in X-Men #104; Prof. X Cover
- Giant Size Fantastic Four #4 (Feb 1975) Prof. X helps against new mutant, Maddrox; last X-Man app. until G.S. #1; promotion of G.S.X-Men #1 "on sale in January"

Non-Continuity:

X-Men Solo Appearances

MAGNETO, MASTER VILLAIN

- Fantastic Four #102-104 (Sep-Nov 1970) Magneto teams up with Subby
- Amazing Adv. #9-10 (Nov 1972-Jan 1973) follows FF storyline Magneto vs Inhumans

BEAST

- Avengers #137-138 (Jul- Aug 1975) He joins Avengers after beating X-foe, Toad.

PROF. X

- Avengers #88 (May 1971) Prof. X confers with Reed Richards about Hulk

ANGEL

- Kazar #3 (Mar 1971) Solo story part 1
- Marvel Tales #30 (Apr 1971) Solo story part 2

METAL MEN

Continued from page 33

Men invited suggestions from their fans, but while many such offerings were published, none was ever accepted as a final choice. Mercury somewhat tactlessly dubbed her "Nameless," and the nickname stuck, although Tin always referred to her as "Beautiful."

Villains

The Metal Men's gallery of villains were as colorful a lot as the robot heroes themselves: Chemo was created when a famous research chemist, to remind himself of his failures, stored the ingredients of his unsuccessful formulae in a huge humanoid-shaped plastic container, which he jokingly nicknamed "Chemo," only to have it come to life as an unstoppable juggernaut capable of dissolving anything in its path with chemical blasts from its mouth. Although destroyed numerous times, Chemo, like the Metal Men, always rose again.

The Missile Men were the creations of Robot Z-1, a renegade construct built on an unknown alien planet, who reactivated himself after his supposed destruction and set about trying to create a suitable "mate," only to create instead an army of duplicates of himself, the Missile Men. Desiring Tina as his mate, Z-1 repeatedly attacked Earth with his Missile Men army.

When Tina "invented" a robot Doc for herself, he turned renegade and created an evil second Metal Men team, including Barium, Aluminum, Calcium, Zirconium, Sodium, and Plutonium, who battled the originals.

The metal band's interplanetary adventures always seemed to land them on planets populated by other robots, usually hostile, with nary a human in sight. Among the most memorable were the robot queen of a robot Amazon matriarchy, and the robot juggernauts who sacrificed passing spaceships and their occupants to "demon space."

Doc, temporarily transformed by a cosmic ray bombardment into a deranged robot, created the Gas Gang, which included Oxygen, Helium, Chloroform, Carbon Monoxide, and Carbon Dioxide, and who twice came close to destroying the Metal Men.

Other villains included the Solar-Brain, the Floating Furies, Dr. Yes and his robot B.O.L.T.S., Prof. Bravo and his Plastic Gang, and Prof. Snakelocks and his energy-being creation, the Sizzler.

New Hunted Metal Men

While the Metal Men's early adventures had an almost surreal comic theme, everything changed as the Silver Age drew to a close. When Carmine Infantino became first DC's art director, then publisher, the Andru/Esposito team was drafted to take his place illustrating *Flash*. For a few issues, Gil Kane pinch-hit on *Metal Men*, then Mike Sekowsky was appointed editor, writer, and artist of the feature, supplanting creator Kanigher, and the Metal Men stories went from light comedy to tragedy.

First Nameless was written out of the strip, then Doc Magnus, while the other robots, running out of control, were branded public menaces. After a few issues as "the new hunted Metal Men," they were apprehended and seemingly destroyed, only to

CBM CHECKLIST

METAL MEN

SHOWCASE

#37 (Mar/Apr 1962) "The Flaming Doom" 25 pgs; Origin and first appearance; a l stories oy Kanigher/Andru/Esposito

#38 (May/Jun 1962) "The Nightmare Menace" 26 pgs; 2nd tryout appearance

#39 (Jul/Aug 1962) "The Deathless Doom" 26 pgs; 3rd tryout appearance; origin and first app. of Chemo

#40 (Sep/Oct 1962) "The Day the Metal Men Melted" 25 pgs; 4th tryout appearance; return of Chemo

METAL MEN

#1 (Apr/May 1963) "Rain of the Missile Men" 25 pgs; 1st issue; first appearance of the Missile Men

#2 (Jun/Jul 1963) "Robots of Terror" 25 pgs; Robot Doc and Evil Metal Men team; stories are continued thru #6

#3 (Aug/Sep 1963) "The Moon's Invisible Army" 25 pgs

#4 (Oct/Nov 1963) "The Bracelet of Doomed Heroes" 25 pgs

#5 (Dec 1963/Jan 1964) "Menace of the Mammoth Robots" 25 pgs

#6 (Feb/Mar 1964) "The Day Doc Turned Robot" 25 pgs; Doc becomes a robot; first app. of the Gas Gang

#7 (Apr/May 1964) "The Living Gun" 25 pgs; Metal Men vs. Solar/Brain

#8 (Jun/Jul 1964) "Playground of Terror" 25 pgs; Stories are continued thru issue #10

#9 (Aug/Sep 1964) "The Robot Juggernaut" 25 pgs

#10 (Oct/Nov 1964) "Revolt of the Gas Gang" 25 pgs

Return of the Gas Gang

#11 (Dec 1964/Jan 1965) "The Floating Furies" 24 pgs

#12 (Feb/Mar 1965) "Shake the Stars" 25 pgs; Return of the Missile Men

#13 (Apr/May 1965) "Raid of the Skyscraper Robot" 26 pgs; Origin and first appearance of Nameless

#14 (Jun/Jul 1965) "The Headless Robots" 25 pgs; Return of Chemo

#15 (Aug/Sep 1965) "The Revenge of the Rebel Robot" 24 pgs; First appearance of B.O.L.T.S.

#16 (Oct/Nov 1965) "Robots for Sale" 24 pgs; Metal Men reduced to toy size

#17 (Dec 1965/Jan 1966) "I Married a Robot" 25 pgs

#18 (Feb/Mar 1966) "The Dinosaur Who Stayed for Dinner" 24 pgs

#19 (Apr/May 1966) "The Man/Horse of Hades 24 pgs

#20 (Jun/Jul 1966) "Birthday Cake for a Cannibal Robot" 24 pgs; Return of B.O.L.T.S.; 1st app. of Dr. Yes (robot counterpart of Kanigher's Wonder Woman villain, Egg Fu)

#21 (Aug/Sep 1966) "The Metal Men vs. the Plastic Perils" 24 pgs; Metal Men vs. Prof. Bravo & the Plastic Gang

#22 (Oct/Nov 1966) "Attack of the Sizzler" 24 pgs; Metal Men turn human; first appearance of Prof. Snakelocks and the Sizzler; stories are continued thru issue #25

#23 (Dec 1966/Jan 1967) "Rage of the Lizard" 24 pgs; Prof. Snakelocks, the Sizzler, the Lizard

#24 (Feb/Mar 1967) "The Balloon Man Hangs High" 23 pgs; The Sizzler, Balloon Man

#25 (Apr/May 1967) "Return of Chemo//the

GOLD -- WE CAN DESTROY DOC ! YOU'RE A BIG BRAIN ! DO SOMETHING !
CAN'T, TINA ! IF MY I.Q. WAS LOWER -- MAYBE THE SOLAR-BRAIN WOULD HAVE LESS EFFECT ON ME ! HOW ABOUT YOU, TIN ?
P-P-POWERLESS, TOO ! IRON -- YOU'RE THE STRONG METAL -- C-C-CAN'T YOU STOP US ?
NO ! MY MUSCLE'S NO GOOD AGAINST THE SOLAR BRAIN ! HOW ABOUT YOU, MERCURY ?
NO ! LEAD'S OUR ONLY HOPE !
CAN'T UHH-DO ANYTHING AS A UHH-CHAMBER !

resurface in human "secret identities" provided by the mysterious billionaire philanthropist, Mr. Conan. Then Doc was brainwashed and became a villain, and the robots were forced to battle their own creator. In the midst of all this, falling sales figures finally caused the series to be cancelled with issue #41 (December 1969/January 1970).

In the '70s, the Metal Men would resurface periodically as Batman's teammates in *Brave & Bold*, continue their original numbering in a brief reprint series, and finally return in new adventures for another dozen issues of their own title before being cancelled again in the "DC Implosion" of 1978. In the '80s, the robots played minor roles in the *Crisis On Infinite Earths* maxi-series, then collected dust until their recent mini-series produced by "the team that killed Superman," as Mike Carlin and Dan Jurgens were aptly billed on the cover.

Like the "accidents" described above, my own initial exposure to *Metal Men* was also an accident. Seems I just happened upon an issue at a friend's house one day when I was 13, read it, discovered it was a continued story (as were most of the early issues, which was something of a rarity in the early '60s), and was immediately compelled to seek out all the back issues. In a way, *Metal Men* was my "bridge" from a childhood spent collecting funny animal comics to an adolescence spent collecting superheroes. The Metal Men were simple one-note characters (since each member had a single dominant personality trait), as could readily be found in the "funnies," but they fought dangerous menaces and had ongoing personal problems like the characters in the other adventure titles. By the time I had begun to assemble a run of the title, the robots had made their first guest-appearance, in *Brave & Bold* #55 with the Atom, and I was off to explore the DC Universe. From Doc Magnus's lab, it was a short hop to the Batcave, the Fortress of Solitude, and the JLA Secret Sanctuary… and then on to the Baxter Building.

Meanwhile, for the present, it seems the Metal Men are an accident waiting to happen… again.

Chemical Menace" 23 pgs; Return of Chemo; the Sizzler destroyed

#26 (Jun/Jul 1967) "Menace of the Metal Mods" 24 pgs Don't ask!

#27 (Aug/Sep 1967) "The Startl ng Origin of the Metal Men" 23 pgs; Origin retold

#28 (Oct/Nov 1967) "You Can't Trust a Robot" 23 pgs

#29 (Dec 1967/Jan1968) "The Robot/Eater from Metalas 5" 23 pgs

#30 (Feb/Mar 1968) "Terror of the Forbidden Dimension" 29 pgs; Kane art begins

#31 (Apr/May 1968) "Amaz. School for Robots" 23 pgs; Intro Metal Men understudies Silver, Cobalt, Zinc, Osmium, Gallium, Iridium

#32 (Jun/Jul 1968) "The Metal Women Blues" 23 pgs; Intro female counterparts of Metal Men

#33 (Aug/Sep 1968) "Recipe to Kill a Robot" 23 pgs; 1st "new hunted Metal Men"; intro Col. David Magnus (Doc's brother); Sekowsky story and art begins; stories are continued thru issue #38

#34 (Oct/Nov 1968) "Death Comes Calling" 23 pgs

#35 (Dec 1968/Jan 1969) "Danger/Doom Dummies" 23 pgs

#36 (Feb/Mar 1969) "The Cruel Clowns" 23 pgs

#37 (Apr/May 1969) "To Walk Among Men" 23 pgs; Intro Mr. Conan & Metal Men's human "secret identities"

#38 (Jun/Jul 1969) "Witch Hunt/1969" 24 pgs

#39 (Aug/Sep 1969) "Beauty of the Beast" 25 pgs, Stories are continued thru issue #41

#40 (Oct/Nov 1969) "The Dreadful Hunt" 23 pgs; Final issue of original series

#41 (Dec 1969/Jan1970) "Requiem for a Robot" 23 pgs; Final iss. of original series

#42 (Feb/Mar 1973) Reprints Showcase #39, Reprint series begins

#43 (Apr/May 1973) Reprints issue #14

#44 (Jun/Jul 1973) Reprints issue #1; Reprints series ends

#45 (Apr/May 1976) "Evil is in the Eye of the Beholder" 18 pgs; Revived series begins: Simonson art begins; stories are continued thru ssue #47

#46 (Jun/Jul 1976) "The Chemo Conspiracy" 17 pgs; Return of Chemo

#47 (Aug/Sep 1976) "The 'X' Effect" 17 pgs

#48 (Oct/Nov 1976) "Who s Bruce Gordon and Why Is He Doing Those Terrible Things to Himself?" 17 pgs; Metal Men vs. Eclipso; stories are continued thru issue #56

#49 (Dec 1976/Jan 1977 "The Dark God Cometh" 17 pgs; Eclipso continues

#50 (Feb/Mar 1977 "Our Mentor, the Robot" 17 pgs; Reprints issue #6 with new framing sequence

#51 (Apr/May 1977) "Killing Me Softly With His Scream" 17 pgs

#52 (Jun/Jul 1977) "Doctor Strangeglove and the Brain Children" 17 pgs

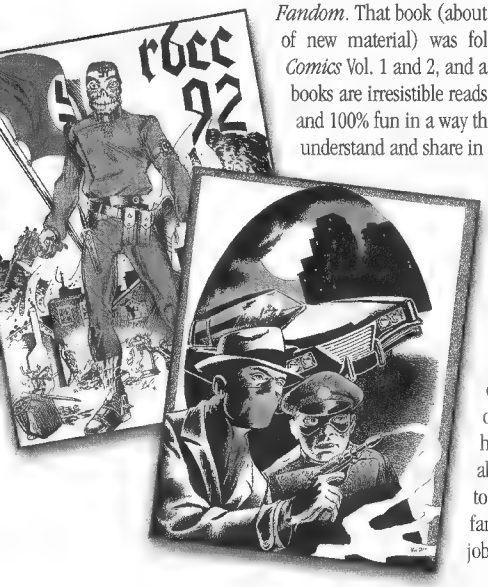
#53 (Aug/Sep 1977) "The Hand That Shocks the Cradle Rules the World" 17 pgs

#54 (Oct/Nov 1977) "After the Ending" 17 pgs; Green Lantern guest/stars; return of the Miss.le Men

#55 (Dec 1977/Jan 1978 "The Master Machinations of the Missile Men" 17 pgs; Green Lantern guest/stars; Missile Men

#56 (Feb/Mar 1978) "The Inheritor Kills" 17 pgs; Final iss

RBCC #92 features a great Nazi cover by Farwell/Warner. RBCC #87 sports the late Don Newton's drawing of Green Hornet and Kato.



BILL SCHELLY and I have been friends since the mid-'60s...except, for the first 25 years or so, we didn't know it! In the mid-'60s, we were both fanzine fanatics, producing our own fanzines and contributing to others. It turns out we each contributed art and articles to many of the same fanzines, and on at least one occasion, I inked Bill's pencils for an amateur comic strip.

It wasn't until Bill joined *CAPA-alpha*, fandom's oldest apa, where I've hung my own fanzine hat for about ten years now, that he and I solidified our friendship. Bill's vibrant interest in fanzines and comic fandom's rich history is obvious in every word he writes. It was just a matter of time until he turned that love into a personal project called *The Golden Age of Comic Fandom*. That book (about to be reprinted with 40 pages of new material) was followed by *Fandom's Finest Comics* Vol. 1 and 2, and a "best of" *Alter Ego* tome. His books are irresistible reads; scholarly yet conversational, and 100% fun in a way that makes it easy for readers to understand and share in his joy of all things fannish.

So, when *CBM* Editor Gary M. Carter invited me to interview Bill, I jumped at the chance to share some time with a guy who mirrors my own lifelong love and comics and comics fandom. Bill has some thoughtful observations about the history of comicdom and where it's headed. And if anything you're about to read makes you want to become more involved in fandom, we've both done our job.

JEFF GELB: When did you start collecting comic books?

BILL SCHELLY: I began in 1960 at eight years old, with the Superman and Batman family of comic books from DC. As soon as I realized that I liked comics, and that each issue had a consecutive number, I started saving them.

Everything about comic books appealed to me. The colorful artwork and exciting stories. I loved the idea of costumed crime-fighters. I had a lot of fantasies about actually adopting a secret identity and fighting crime. I was really envious of Robin, who got to fight alongside my favorite costumed hero, Batman.

GELB: Do you still read and collect comics?

SCHELLY: Yes, I spend plenty of money each week at my favorite comics store. I read a wide variety of material, especially the more thoughtful adult series like Paul Chadwick's *Concrete* and Seth's *Palookaville*. Kurt Busiek's *Astro City* is my favorite new superhero title. I enjoy the superheroes of the Golden and Silver Age most, and buy nearly all of the reprint books.

As for collecting, I do buy old comics, though not in a systematic way. I like discovering new corners of the comics universe, and so have poked my nose into St. John romance comics, Simon & Kirby crime comics—just about every genre. I also joined the AACC (American Association of Comicbook Collectors) this year.

GELB: How did you first learn of fanzines?

SCHELLY: Julius Schwartz was kind enough to plug comics fanzines in a number of his letter columns, most often in *Justice League of America*. The one I saw appeared in *JLA* #29, giving the address of G.B. Love's *Rocket's Blast-Comicollector*, the main advertising fanzine of the day. This was around September 1964. I was immediately intrigued, especially with the idea of being able to find back issues. When I got my first issue of *RB-CC*, my mind was totally blown. I marveled at page after page of old comics offered for sale. My attention was drawn right away to the fanzine advertisements. Before long, I had received copies of *Batmania* #1, *Yancy Street Journal* #4 and *Alter Ego* #7. I was hooked.

GELB: When did you decide to publish your own fanzine?

SCHELLY: As soon as I discovered fandom. When I realized that you could sell your own magazine through the mail, I immediately began planning to put out my own zine. My first one was called *Super Heroes Anonymous*, and it came out in February, 1965.

GELB: How many copies did you print?

SCHELLY: About 35. It was printed for free on an early Xerox machine. Remember those first copy machines? They couldn't print solid blacks. This was especially bad news for me, because I'd designed a cover that featured my Immortal Corpse character, and it was about 75% black. I was so disappointed when I saw how that cover printed. Ugh!

GELB: What exactly was the appeal of fanzine publishing for you?

SCHELLY: It was a creative outlet that I could completely control. I could design the magazine from front to back. The cover, the price, the types of articles and artwork—everything. The idea that I, as a 12-year-old kid, was calling the shots in my fanzine world was so cool. Even today, I still prefer self-publishing, despite all the hassles... because I can design the product myself. That's very satisfying to me. I think the same thing appealed to a lot of fanzine publishers—or, for that matter, appeals to lots of alternative comics types today.

GELB: Would you say that you were sort of a

FACING PAGE: **RBCC #101 features a "modern" rendition of Captain Marvel by Black.**

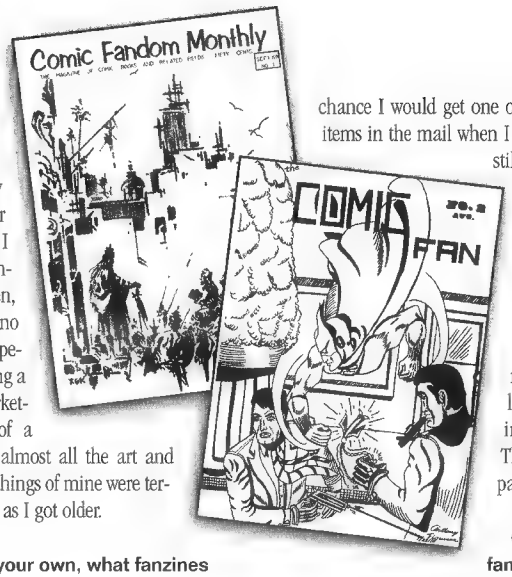
Fighting Hero #14 showcases a Joe Rabon cover and Biljo White's "Origin of the Lion!" inside.

BY JEFF GELB

MR. FANZINE

A talk with fandom founder, Bill Schelly

MR. FANZINE



Comic Fandom Monthly #1 (Sep 1971) was the "magazine of comic books & related fields" and Comic Fan #2 (Aug 1965) contains a rare interview with Steve Ditko.

junior achiever type, a young entrepreneur?

SCHELLY: To a degree, maybe … but to me it was mainly a hobby. I wasn't doing it for money. I was motivated because I loved comics, and I loved publishing. Most fanzines barely broke even, or lost money—and mine were no exception. Even so, it was good experience in the many facets of running a small business. You had to do marketing, product design, banking (of a sort), record-keeping. Plus I did almost all the art and writing at first. Those early things of mine were terribly crude. They improved as I got older.

GELB: Other than your own, what fanzines carried your work?

SCHELLY: I had small amounts of work in *Voice of Comicdom, Batmania, Heroes' Hangout* and *The Collector.* My main thing was writing and drawing amateur strips. When I indexed them recently, I realized I did more than 300 pages of comic strips back then. Most of them appeared in obscure little zines like *Bombshell, Comique, Action Hero* and the like. I never made it to the "top-of-the-line" zines like *Star-Studded Comics,* though I tried from time to time.

Scarce copies of CAPA-alpha #7 (Apr 1965), #8 (May 1965), and #9 (Jun 1965). The term CAPA is an acronym for "Comicdom's FIRST Amateur Press Alliance."

GELB: There were many different types of fanzines.

SCHELLY: Originally Jerry Bails wanted *Alter-Ego* to carry advertisements and news of the pros, as well as articles, artwork and interviews. He soon discovered that such an all-encompassing publication was impractical, because different purposes demanded different publishing schedules. The advertising had to be published in a timely manner, and the news of upcoming professional comics couldn't wait for the rest of the magazine to be put together. Those sections very quickly broke out of *A-E* to become the first ad-zine and news-zine. Eventually fanzines specialized, devoting their pages to the comics of just one publisher, or genre, or character.

GELB: What was the biggest joy in producing a fanzine?

SCHELLY: Getting mail. Knowing that there was a good chance I would get one or two or even more cool items in the mail when I got home from school. I still get excited by getting mail. On Saturdays I literally "haunted" our mailbox.

GELB: What was the biggest pain?

SCHELLY: The mundane stuff, like collating the pages, stamping, addressing them. Those tasks were such a pain in the neck.

GELB: Among all the fanzines you published during the 1960s, do you have a favorite?

SCHELLY: *Sense of Wonder* #11 and 12 were my favorites. They were professionally printed, which was expensive so it was a mark of a certain distinction. The main thing about them I was proud of was the two-part article on the career of Will Eisner. The minute I saw the Harvey Spirit reprints, I became an Eisner fanatic. The Spirit received a fair amount of fanzine coverage, but the articles in *Sense of Wonder* were perhaps the first attempts to chronicle his entire career, from *Wow! What A Magazine* through *P.S.* This was in 1972, just before he began doing new comics work. *Sense of Wonder* #11 also featured one of the best Mr. A segments by Ditko.

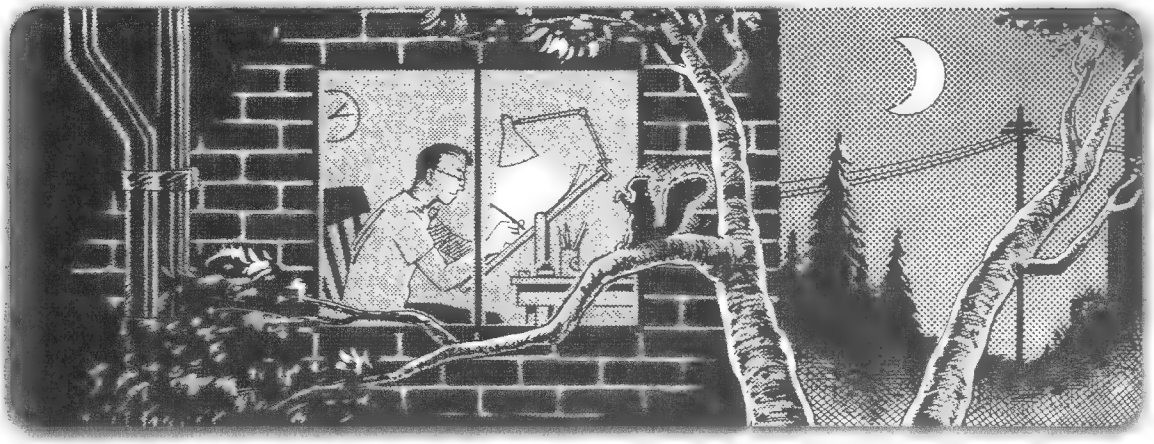
GELB: How were the fanzines viewed by comics publishers?

SCHELLY: Pros looked at fanzines in a variety of ways. Because he had published SF fanzines himself in the 1930s, Julius Schwartz completely understood where the fans were coming from. I don't think he read them thoroughly, but he enjoyed receiving them. Occasionally there was a little flap, like the time DC objected when some fans attempted to do their own update of Dr. Mid-Nite, or the time Fawcett ordered Roy Thomas to desist from publishing a new story of the Marvel Family by Otto Binder.

Stan Lee was very encouraging to fan publishers. Either Stan, or Flo Steinberg, or later Roy Thomas would write a nice note, acknowledging receipt of the fanzine.

GELB: When did professionals begin contributing to the fan magazines?

SCHELLY: Otto Binder provided feedback to Dick Lupoff's *All In Color For A Dime* piece on Capt. Marvel in 1960. In 1962, Jack Kirby sent a sketch of The Thing to Jerry Bails, which saw print in *Alter-Ego* #4. Even Steve Ditko did a number of early inked drawings for the fanzines.



Letterhead drawing by Bill Schelly.

As the 1960s wore on, and many of the fanzines improved in quality, I think pros began to see the fan press as a legitimate way of communicating with their readers. Interviews with industry luminaries became common, and so did sketches and even completed drawings by professionals. Then Wally Wood and Bill Pearson launched a fanzine that was really a "prozine" called *Witzend*. It was an important step in many ways, not only for creator's rights, but also as an alternative to the mainstream publishers.

Many pros gave the impression that we fans should be less idealistic in our requests, that we should somehow realize the commercial demands that the pros had to deal with. But, to paraphrase Mark Evanier later, "Why? We were fans, not marketing advisers." It has never been the role of fans to take into account the professional's concerns.

GELB: How hard is it to locate copies of fanzines?

SCHELLY: It's not as difficult as one might think. Offset fanzines like *Graphic Story Magazine* had print runs in excess of 1,000 copies. Some, like *Witzend*, printed as many as 5,000. Given the pack-rat mentality of many fans, there are a lot of copies out there, tucked away in boxes. The trick is to get people to drag out those boxes. I've had pretty good luck finding fanzines at the San Diego Comicon.

The harder ones to find are the ones from the early 1960s that were printed by mimeograph or spirit duplicator. Most of those had circulations of no more than 200 copies, often less than 100. Still, you never know what you will find, if you know what you're looking for. I recently found a copy of my own *Super Heroes Anonymous* #2 in San Diego... in near mint no less, and I printed less than 50 copies.

GELB: How many had you saved from your early period of fan activity?

SCHELLY: Only a handful of my own. I foolishly sold my entire fanzine collection, and my comics collection too, around 1974. I had just graduated from the Univ. of Idaho, and needed the money to move to Seattle. I'm sure I had at least 500 or so.

GELB: When did you decide to re-build your fanzine collection?

SCHELLY: Almost as soon as I got back into comicdom in 1991, and joined *CAPA-alpha*, I realized how much I missed having at least some of the fanzines. I began by advertising for them. Gradually, I began building what I loftily refer to as my archive.

GELB: What is the Comic Fandom Archive?

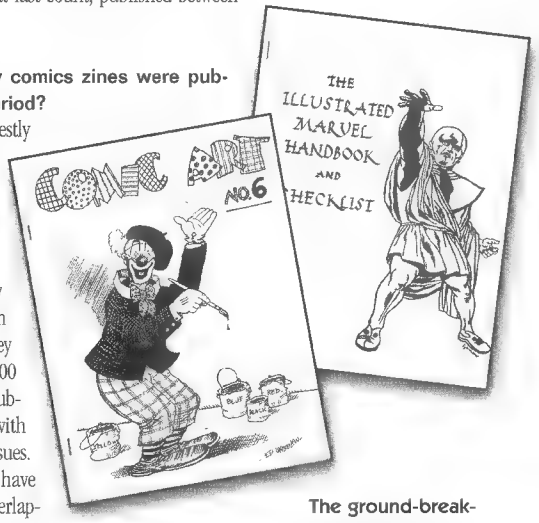
SCHELLY: It's a fancy name for the large collection of fandom memorabilia I've amassed.

GELB: How many fanzines does it include?

SCHELLY: 1,642 at last count, published between 1947 and 1983.

GELB: How many comics zines were published during that period?

SCHELLY: I honestly don't know. Luckily there were a couple of inveterate indexers named John and Tom McGeehan who bought every comics fanzine they could find starting in 1961. Ten years later, they had a record of some 600 different fanzine titles published in the 1960s, with about 2,700 different issues. Some of those would have been zines from other overlapping fandoms, like old-time radio... Edgar Rice Burroughs... and some SF zines.



The ground-breaking Illustrated Marvel Handbook and Checklist (1967) and Don & Maggie Thompson's Comic Art #6 (1966).

GELB: What sort of prices do vintage fanzines command?

SCHELLY: Anything from $2 a piece to $200, with most going for $15 to $25 each. *(Continued on page 64)*

MR. FANZINE

Continued from page 63

GELB: What's the most valuable comics fanzine?

SCHELLY: Interesting question … and I don't know the answer. I'm sure *Alter-Ego* #1, *Comic Art* #1 and *Xero* #1 would sell for at least $100 a piece, maybe considerably more.

GELB: Have you thought about producing a complete fanzine index?

SCHELLY: That's something I would love to see. A number of fans have begun such projects, but to my knowledge no one has approached completing the task. But again, it's not my sort of project. I know that Al Dellinges was planning such a book at one point, and Gerry Sorek has assembled a large list as well. I would certainly encourage a complete or even mostly-complete index. Maybe it could have a section on pricing with anecdotal information and general thoughts on the subject.

Heroes Illustrated #2 (Spring 1966) announced that Clay Kimball was the winner of a copy of All Star #39 and Dual Identity #2 (Jun/Aug 1965) contained a call for an "up-to-date bibliography of current fanzines."

GELB: What are some of the fanzines that you would consider essential for a fanzine collector?

SCHELLY: Those who love the Golden Age heroes would definitely want *Alter Ego,* EC fans would love *Squa Tront*, serious fans of the medium could find no better fanzines than *Graphic Story Magazine* and *Comic Art,* and fans of Barks and animation would love *Funnyworld*. During the latter part of the 1960s and into the 1970s, Martin Greim's *Comic Crusader* offered a lot of nifty art by Jim Steranko, Steve Ditko and many other professionals. The same with *The Collector, Fantastic Fanzine,* and pro-zines like *Infinity, Phase* and *Anomaly*. I think just about anyone would enjoy leafing through the mid-'60's issues of *RB-CC*, which are a fun way to absorb the flavor of those great days.

GELB: Many of today's pros got their start in fanzines.

SCHELLY: Yes, and as a result, certain issues are highly collectible. Bernie Wrightson did a handful of wonderful covers for RB-CC around the time he was breaking into pro comics. Jim Starlin drew a series of strips featuring a mystic character Doctor Weird, just before making the jump to pro-dom in the early 1970s. Mike Zeck, Frank Miller, Dave Cockrum, Jerry Ordway, Klaus Janson, Dave Stevens, Kerry Gammill and John Byrne are just some of the people whose work first saw print in the fan magazines back then. Writers, too. Doug Moench, Roy Thomas, Tony Isabella, many others.

GELB: It was their early work…

SCHELLY: Yes, but a lot of it was very good. Personally, I think it's fascinating to see the early developmental work of a Frank Miller or a Dave Cockrum. Wrightson's work from this period is stunning.

Fandom reunion 1997 in Chicago! LtoR: Jerry Bails (founder of Alter Ego), Howard Keltner (editor of Star-Studded Comics), Roy Thomas and Bill Schelly.

GELB: Other than fanzines, what's kept in the Comic Fandom Archive?

SCHELLY: I've literally stumbled across all kinds of wonderful stuff, while in the process of prospecting for fanzines. When I got in touch with Ronn Foss, one of the premiere artists from fandom's early days, he spontaneously donated the original redwood carving of Alley Oop that served to make the mold for the plaster Alley Award statuettes in 1962 and 1963. Shel Dorf found an audio tape of a meeting between a bunch of fans in Detroit with a *Newsweek* reporter in 1965. Howard Keltner donated dozens of pages of original art from strips that appeared in *Star-Studded Comics*. Biljo White sent me a video transfer of a brief super 8mm movie recording the time Jerry Bails and Roy Thomas visited him at his home in Columbia, Missouri in 1963. Those are just some of the things. There are photographs, vintage correspondence, lots more.

GELB: How did you arrive at the name "Hamster Press" for your publishing company?

SCHELLY: It started as a joke in my fanzine-publishing days in the 1960s. At that time, it was fashionable to come up with an impressive name for your publishing company. Since I had a series of pet hamsters as a boy, I coined the name Hamster Press as a joke. Years later, when I was getting set to self-publish *The Golden Age of Comic Fandom*, I needed a name for my business. I decided to revive Hamster Press, still with tongue-in-cheek. Since then, I've gotten many different visual interpretations of furry rodents being squished… oftentimes on the outside of envelopes. Sometimes I wonder what the Post Office employees think.

GELB: What was the impetus for The Golden Age of Comic Fandom?

SCHELLY: As I was collecting fanzines, it occurred to me that there should be a book-length history of comics fandom. Obviously the comic fandom movement of the 1960s was a significant cultural phenomenon, and yet no one had written about it at length. I thought, "If no one writes about it, most of the details might be lost forever." After all, when I began doing the actual writing in 1994, many of fandom's founders were nearing retirement age. Already a number of them had passed away. Since no one else was working on it, I decided I'd better be the one to do it.

I wasn't prepared for the personal odyssey I was about to take. Before long researching fandom's history became a full-blown obsession. I kept digging and digging, spending hundreds of dollars on long distance phone calls and postage, tracking down folks and doing the research. The book was published in May 1995. I have to say that I was flabbergasted with the response. In a very short time, I counted over a hundred lengthy letters from readers, many of them recounting in detail their own experiences as participants in fandom's past.

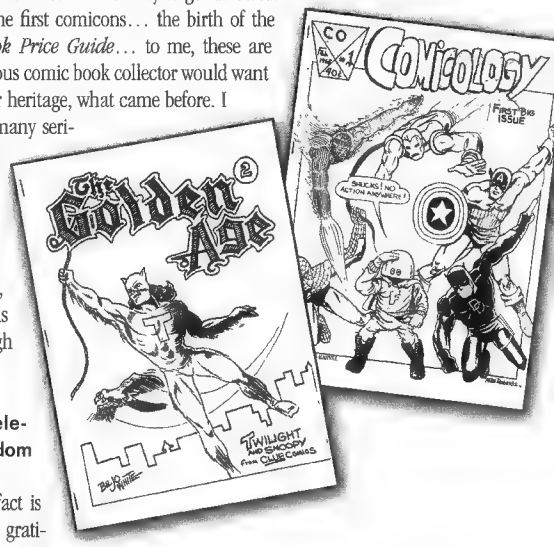
GELB: You are going back to press with it. Why?

SCHELLY: After producing four books in three years, I was telling everyone that I was ready to take a break. Bud Plant said, "Okay, but you have to reprint *Golden Age* before you stop. It's your most important book and you didn't print nearly enough copies." He had a point. I had only printed 1,000 copies, and it wasn't nearly enough. But I didn't want to just reprint it, without going in and correcting a few errors, as well as expanding some parts of it.

GELB: Do young fans care about the origins of comics fandom? Should they?

SCHELLY: I've met some younger fans who are interested in the topic, but they are few and far between. Some people like histories. One of my goals was to make it readable, almost like a novel. It has a remarkable story to tell. A few people who loved the medium managed to be the catalyst for a genuine cultural phenomenon. They were the ones written about in the articles that began appearing in newspapers like the *New York Times* and magazines like *Newsweek*—all those articles about "comics are worth big bucks."

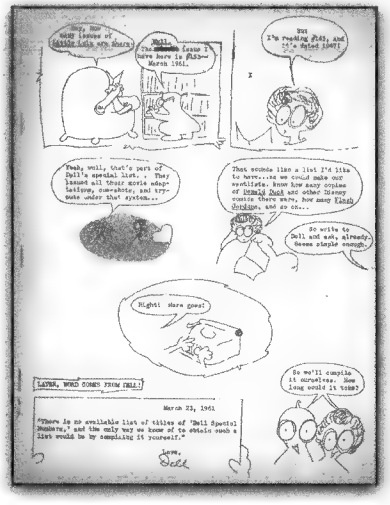
Of course, the fact that fandom provided desperate collectors with a way to find back issues of their favorite titles was one of the main reasons for fans across the country to get involved. The early dealers... the first comicons... the birth of the *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide*... to me, these are things I think any serious comic book collector would want to know about. It's our heritage, what came before. I just don't know how many serious collectors there are that are coming up, who are now in their late teens and twenties. Maybe I'll reach more of them, now that the book is being solicited through Diamond.



The Golden Age #2 (1966) featured Twilight & Snoopy by Biljo White and Comicology #1 (Mar 1968) explains that the fanzine's title means "the study of comics."

GELB: Why celebrate the early fandom pioneers?

SCHELLY: The fact is that we owe a debt of gratitude to fandom's founders. They were the ones who legitimized the hobby of comic collecting, and got the first comicons going. They were the ones who rescued most of the pre-Code comics before they crumbled from neglect in attics and basements around the country. They were some of the first to let professional comic book writers and artists know that their work was appreciated by discerning adults, rather than strictly kids. It's important that their contribution to the hobby isn't forgotten.



GELB: What's the role of comics fandom in your life today?

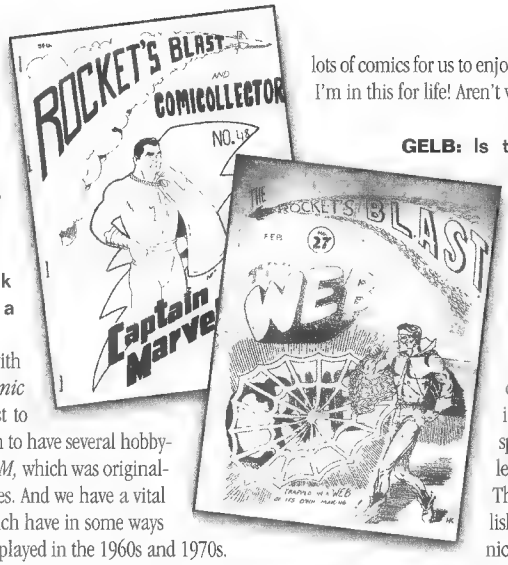
SCHELLY: For me, fandom is an incredible blessing. I feel so fortunate to have the eyes and imagination to be able to appreciate the artistry of this amazing medium. I will always love comics, and will always feel a special kinship with others who feel similarly. That's fandom.

Thanks to my fan activity, I've come into contact with some of the nicest people on the face of the planet. Roy Thomas has been unfailingly generous with his time, and is truly a fan at heart. Howard Keltner, who just passed away, was a true inspiration to me. The folks in *CAPA-alpha* are like an extended family to me.

I look forward to my treks to San Diego each year because it's a chance to not only see old friends, but

The super-scarce Four Color Comics Index (Mar 1968, First Edition) by Don and Maggie Thompson was the first fan publication to document the entire title... including the large Feature Comics and the Single Series run.

to come together to share our enthusiasm for the medium. This enthusiasm is in no way diminishing—it's just getting better as I get older, and I realize what a treasure this hobby is for me, in so many ways.



Rocket's Blast & Comicollector #48 (1966); Rocket's Blast #27 (Feb 1964, print run= 250); Gotham Gazette #2 (Jul 1965, the "Official Newsletter of the Batmanians"); CBM #1 (Mar 1991); and Sense of Wonder #12 (Sum 1972, last issue).

GELB: Do you think fanzines could make a comeback?

SCHELLY: They're still with us. There's *Comic Effect, Comic Heaven, It's a Fanzine*… just to name a few. We're lucky enough to have several hobby-oriented magazines, such as *CBM,* which was originally a fanzine for the first 21 issues. And we have a vital alternative and small press, which have in some ways inherited the role that fanzines played in the 1960s and 1970s.

I never look down my nose at some of the admittedly crude books one can find in today's small press, alongside the better stuff. Quality aside, it's such a constructive outlet. Even Freddie Wertham couldn't find anything but good things to say about fanzines as a social force in his *World of Fanzines* book. I see activity in fandom as an entirely positive thing, especially for today's youth. Whether it's on the internet, or the fan press, or mini-comics, there's plenty of ways for today's comics fans to express their enthusiasm for the medium.

GELB: It sounds like you are enthusiastic about the future of comicdom.

SCHELLY: When have we, as fans, ever had it better? The variety of material that's now available is just mind-blowing. All the reprint editions, the foreign comics, the new talent that continually streams into the field. I had more fun this year at the San Diego Comicon than I've ever had before. It was a total high. There's something for every interest. The possibilities for fandom are endless.

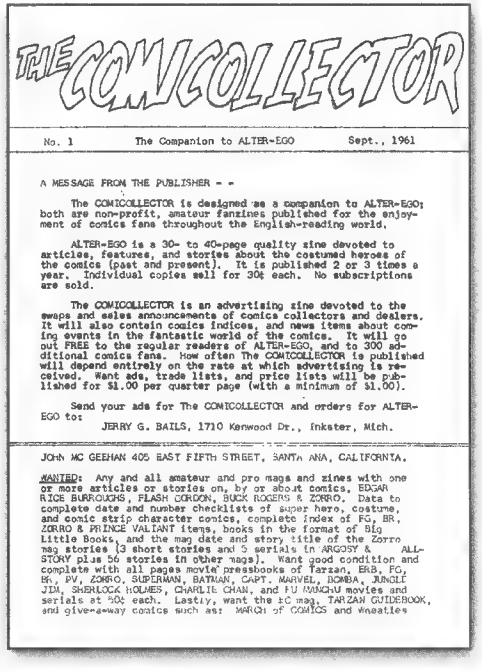
GELB: Are you an optimist about the future of comic books?

SCHELLY: The sequential art medium is not going to go away. The market may shrink, but I'm confident there will be lots of comics for us to enjoy for the rest of our lives. Hey, I'm in this for life! Aren't we all?

GELB: Is there another Hamster tome on the horizon?

SCHELLY: Now that *Golden Age of Comic Fandom* is being reissued, I plan to take that a break from book publishing. Five books in four years is enough for now. But I am currently writing and penciling a one-shot comic book special featuring Biljo White's legendary fandom superhero, The Eye, which will be published by Image Comics. It's a nice change of pace for me. I want to show people that I can not only write *about* comics and fandom—I can also *create* comics. It's another challenge for me. I'm enjoying it immensely.

Jeff Gelb is the editor of the highly successful Hot Blood *book series from Pocket Books.*


THE COMICOLLECTOR

No. 1 The Companion to ALTER-EGO Sept., 1961

A MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER - -

The COMICOLLECTOR is designed as a companion to ALTER-EGO; both are non-profit, amateur fanzines published for the enjoyment of comics fans throughout the English-reading world.

ALTER-EGO is a 30- to 40-page quality zine devoted to articles, features, and stories about the costumed heroes of the comics (past and present). It is published 2 or 3 times a year. Individual copies sell for 30¢ each. No subscriptions are sold.

The COMICOLLECTOR is an advertising zine devoted to the swaps and sales announcements of comics collectors and dealers. It will also contain comics indices, and news items about coming events in the fantastic world of the comics. It will go out FREE to the regular readers of ALTER-EGO, and to 300 additional comics fans. How often The COMICOLLECTOR is published will depend entirely on the rate at which advertising is received. Want ads, trade lists, and price lists will be published for $1.00 per quarter page (with a minimum of $1.00).

Send your ads for The COMICOLLECTOR and orders for ALTER-EGO to:

JERRY G. BAILS, 1710 Kenwood Dr., Inkster, Mich.

JOHN MC GEEHAN 405 EAST FIFTH STREET, SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA.

WANTED: Any and all amateur and pro mags and zines with one or more articles or stories on, by or about comics, EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS, FLASH GORDON, BUCK ROGERS & ZORRO. Data to complete date and number checklists of super hero, costume, and comic strip character comics, complete index of FC, BR, ZORRO & PRINCE VALIANT items, books in the format of Big Little Books, and the mag date and story title of the Zorro mag stories (3 short stories and 5 serials in ARGOSY & ALL-STORY plus 56 stories in other mags). Want good condition and complete with all pages movie pressbooks of Tarzan, ERB, FC, BR, PV, ZORRO, SUPERMAN, BATMAN, CAPT. MARVEL, BOMBA, JUNGLE JIM, SHERLOCK HOLMES, CHARLIE CHAN, and FU MANCHU movies and serials at 50¢ each. Lastly, want the EC mag, TARZAN GUIDEBOOK, and give-a-way comics such as: MARCH of COMICS and Wheaties

One of the rarest and most collectible of all fanzines… The Comicollector #1 (Sep 1961).

Fantastic Fanzines!

By Mark Burbey

AS EC BREATHED ITS LAST AND the fanzines devoted to its output faded into oblivion, comic fandom began to take form in the primordial tide pools of a phenomenon that has reach world-wide proportions. Science fiction fandom had already established a tradition of intelligent fan publications, and in the '50s, EC fandom followed suit, marking the first wave of fanzines devoted to the enjoyment and collecting of comic books. Using the same mimeograph and hectograph printing machines our teachers used to produce tests and hand-outs in grade school, zines like *The EC Fan Bulletin*, *EC Fan Journal*, *EC World Press*, *Hoobah* and *Potrezebie* proliferated, and it was here that soon-to-be "big name fans" such as Bhob Stewart, Bill Spicer, John Benson and Larry Stark rose to prominence. It was partly through these zines that EC fandom coalesced during the company's glory days and subsequently mourned its passing while keeping the EC spirit alive. The early EC zines typically reported news of upcoming titles, reviewed individual stories, described personal visits to the EC offices, interviewed artists and compiled checklists. The ultimate checklist was a work unto itself compiled by Fred Von Bernewitz. Though not currently in print, the *Complete EC Checklist* has seen numerous revisions and updated editions, proving indispensable to fans and academics alike.

But then EC was gone and the heyday of horror was over. The period of bland compliance with the stultifying Comics Code Authority that followed eventually led to a creative renaissance. The costumed superhero was about to regain dominance for the first time since the exalted Golden Age of comics. DC was reviving and revamping numerous characters not seen since the '40s and Marvel would soon be creating all-new characters reeking of relevance. Yet despite circulations that make today's comic market seem pusillanimous by comparison, all of this was happening in a veritable void. In a recent article in *Chiller Theatre #8*, Russ Jones described assisting Wally Wood on a great deal of comics work, going on to say they "were turning out work for an unknown audience. Big conventions had yet to become part of a comic book artist's landscape, recognition only several miles down the road."

Fans of monster films were far more visible and fortunate. Starting with *Famous Monsters of Filmland* in 1958, monster fans were gifted with a windfall of fun magazines dedicated to ghoulish delights. *Castle of Frankenstein* (1961-75), *Horror Monsters* (1961-65), *Mad Monsters* (1961-65), *Fantastic Monsters of the Films* (1962-63), *Monster World* (1964-66), *Jones' Monster Mania* (1966-67) and Larry Ivie's *Monsters & Heroes* (1967-68) were among the finest to jump on the bandwagon. Quite a few monster fanzines appeared, as well, if one knew where to get them, but fan publications in the world of comics were in short supply. That was about to change.

As comics entered the Silver Age, awareness of fellow fans began to grow through comic book letter pages. Collectors started connecting with each other and gathering in groups to talk and trade comics. Fans like Jerry G. Bails were instrumental in spearheading a great deal of early fan activity as well as initiating the first cluster of classic fanzines that would serve as prototypes for those that would follow. Bails started *Alter Ego* in 1961 in support of DC's revival of Golden Age superheroes. A fanzine in the purest sense, *Alter Ego* was an intelligent celebration of the sense of wonder unique to superhero comics. Joining Bails as co-editor was Roy Thomas, not long before Thomas would make the much-envied transition from comic fan to comic professional. The writing by Bails, Thomas and others was not only enthusiastic but insightful and thorough. The art, by fan artists like Ronn Foss, Biljo White, Gruss Green, and Bails and Thomas themselves, so perfectly suited the time as to seem professional in its own right. Bails instituted two other fanzines that would survive the years under a variety of editorships. *The*

Dedicated to Andy and G.B., for lighting the path, for publishing my work long before I knew what I was doing, and for being my friends.

Fantastic Fanzines!

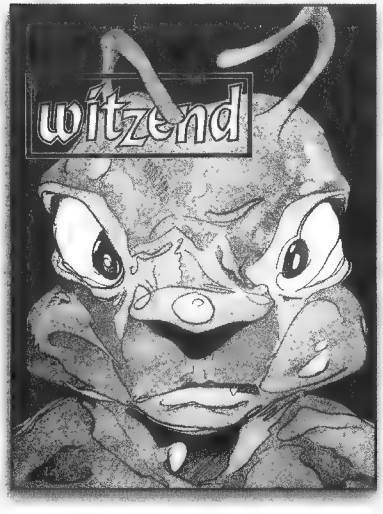
Comicollector (which would soon fold into G.B. Love's *Rocket's Blast*) and *The Comic Reader*, which was spawned from a feature in *Alter Ego* called "On the Drawing Board." Significantly, this early fan and publishing activity led to the first complete comic book index and price guide, compiled by Robert Overstreet (with Bails' encouragement) in 1970.

Sold exclusively via mail order and with print runs ranging from as little as 50 copies up to 2,000 copies, fanzines were a genre unto themselves, seemingly known only to the privileged few who had stumbled upon this secret society of comic book fandom. The subject of fanzines as they pertain to comics is complex enough to warrant book-length analysis, and in fact, *The Golden Age of Comic Fandom* is just such a book, written by long-time fan and zine publisher Bill Schelly. This thorough account of the evolution of comic fandom and the attendant fanzines was issued as a limited edition of 1,000 copies and sold out quickly. (A revised and expanded edition, is presently in publication co-edited by Schelly and Roy Thomas collecting the best of *Alter Ego* #1-11, with contemporary remembrances of what went into their creation.)

According to an article by John Benson published in the fifth issue of *Squa Tront* (1974, the premiere EC zine), the very first comic book fanzine was *The Story Behind Superman*, appearing in the summer of 1952. It bears special historical significance in that it was the first time anyone wrote seriously about the subject of comic books. Revised and retitled *The Facts Behind Superman*, the publisher and co-author was a young fan named Ted White, who would later establish himself as a science fiction author and editor of renown. According to Schelly's book, however, this was preceded by a zine called *The Comic Collector's News*, published by Malcolm Willits and Jim Bradley in October, 1947, with several issues to follow over the next few years. They claimed that "its real purpose was to enhance (their) own collections by making (their) wants more widely known," and Willits would later become a "noted Disney historian and rare comics dealer." Schelly has since learned of an even earlier zine, *Phantasy World*, published 10 years prior, proving that there may well be other "first" fanzines waiting to be discovered.

Along with excerpts from Wally Wood's Wizard King portfolio, Bill Pearson's Witzend #11 (1978) also featured great strips like the "The Enormous Slug Suckers from the Planet Mars!!"

More than a decade after it started in Sep 1967, Squa Tront #8 (1978) featured Jack Davis' old witch.



My introduction to fanzines and comic fandom came by way of *The Rocket's Blast* and *ComiCollector* (*RBCC*), issue #66 (1969), with a stunning cover by Robert Kline. It was filled with columns, articles, artwork, and ads selling old comics, movie stills, original artwork, etc. There were also ads for other fanzines of varying quality. Some of the better ones included Gary Groth's *Fantastic Fanzine*, Jan Strnad's *Anomaly, Graphic Showcase, Comickazi,* Roy Thomas' revived *Alter Ego*, Bill Black's *Paragon Illustrated,* and Love's growing catalog of zines published by the SFCA (South Florida Comic Association). Rich Hauser, editor and publisher of *Spa Fon*, one of the premier EC zines, contributed a column called "EC Revisited." The late Don Newton contributed Chapter 7 of a continuing strip called "The Savage Earth." I was introduced to the art of Berni Wrightson, Mike Kaluta and Steve Hickman. A half-page ad told me of something called underground comix, with the bold claim that they were "going to replace Marvel, DC and all the other schlock houses." This rush of information simply exploded the parameters of my interest in comics.

Like *Alter Ego*, the *RBCC*'s contributions to the advancement and growth of comic fandom are beyond measure, and despite that fact that it functioned primarily as the first adzine, its wealth of articles and artwork made it far more than that. Alan Light's tabloid adzine, *The Buyer's Guide for Comic Fandom*, following its 1971 debut, would come to be the eminent adzine, at which point the *RBCC* devoted many more pages to articles, columns and strips, publishing many talented newcomers and launching many a career. (One of the few remaining zines, *The Buyer's Guide* would eventually fall into the able hands of Don and Maggie Thompson, who would change the name to *Comics Buyer's Guide*.)

The *RBCC* was unique but not altogether dissimilar from many of the early zines. As the new fandom evolved, there were essentially two kinds of fanzines—article oriented fanzines like *Batmania, Slam-Bang, Yancy Street Journal* and *Comic World,* and strip zines such as *Komix Illustrated, Masquerader* and *Star-Studded Comics*. Certainly there were zines that combined articles with amateur comics, but the strip zines were less likely to offer a balance of the two. Aspiring artists were drawn out of the woodwork. Foss, White and Green were only a few of the fan artists who found the strip zines to be the perfect outlet for their original characters and strips. Jim Starlin and Alan Weiss were notable contributors to the strip zines before moving onto pro careers. *All Stars* #1 (1965), published by Golden Gate Features (Bill Dubay, Marty Arbunich, Rudi Franke and Barry Bauman), featured strips by Foss, White, Mike Vosburg and Roger Brand, not to mention a knock-out cover by Steve Ditko. *Graphic Showcase* was another interesting strip zine, and its second issue featured early strips by Kaluta and Hickman. It also featured Wrightson's classic "Uncle Bill's Barrel," a work of unparalleled, unbridled youthful brilliance, both in art and story.

Fantasy Illustrated (1964-67) was perhaps the best of the early strip zines, offering amateur work of professional caliber by artists like George Metzger, Landon Chesney, Joe Staton, D. Bruce Berry and many others. Published by Bill Spicer, many of the strips presaged what would soon be emerging in the underground comix. As Schelly points out in his book, a Metzger

story in *Fantasy Illustrated* #7 was an LSD-inspired story that appeared in the spring of 1967, six months before Robert Crumb was hawking copies of *Zap Comix* #1 on the streets of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district. In fact, Metzger was one of many artists whose fanzine work would later be reprinted as underground comix. Metzger's classic *Moondog*, the ultimate road-trip through the highways of the mind, first appeared in the third (and final) issue of Robert Schoenfeld's excellent *Gosh Wow!* (1969). Metzger's work from *Gosh Wow!* #2 (1968) was soon reprinted in an u.g. comic, as well, as was early work by u.g. star-to-be Vaughn Bode. Certain fanzines and the burgeoning underground movement would come to have qualities in common and, as we'll later see, there were zines that found salvation and prolonged life as u.g. comix.

With its 8th issue (1967), Spicer retooled *Fantasy Illustrated* and changed the name to *Graphic Story Magazine*, shifting the zine's focus to the examination of the unlimited potential of comics as a graphic storytelling medium. His was one of the first zines to combine good strips with serious articles analyzing the art of comics and profiling the industry's groundbreaking creators. (In 1977, *Graphic Story Magazine* was transformed into *Fanfare*, a "magazine of popular culture and all the arts.")

In the strip zines, many young artists found an audience that pro comics would likely never afford them. Ironically, the pros, too, found liberation and opportunity in the fanzine market. As Batmania was sweeping the nation in 1966, Wally Wood was putting the finishing touches on a special publication that would bridge the chasm between the adolescent antics of costumed heroes and the decidedly more adult fare Wood and his colleagues were doing in their spare time. Originally called *Et Cetera* until it was discovered that another publication was already using that title, *Witzend* was unique in the world of fanzines, particularly since it wasn't really a fanzine at all. It was, however, sold like a fanzine, looked like a fanzine, felt like a fanzine, and as an endeavor published outside the confines of professional comics, functioned as a fanzine. It could be argued that Wally Wood and his colleagues were, themselves, fans of comics, but *Witzend* was, more than anything, a place for pros to publish their work Comics Code-free and without relinquishing copyright ownership. Wood did, however, write in his editorial: "The existence of fandom gave the necessary impetus to our faint hearts, and so we want to say to all you horny-handed, ink-stained editor-publishers, demon reviewers and wild-eyed mimeograph machinists, rustling out there in the underbrush... you have shown us the way!"

Wood served as editor/publisher for only the first two issues before passing the editorship over to Bill Pearson, who eventually took over as publisher, as well. Wood continued to contribute art and stories, along with artists like Al Williamson, Frazetta, Steve Ditko, Vaughn Bode, Ralph Reese, Reed Crandall, Jim Steranko, Alex Toth, and many others. In an odd move away from comic material, *Witzend* #9 was devoted solely to the life and work of W.C. Fields. *The W.C. Fields Book* was only co-named as a *Witzend* production in the indicia, but issues #10 and #11 returned to the zine's original intent of publishing offbeat comics.

EC Fanzines Rise From The Dead

The second generation of EC fanzines emerged during the latter half of the 1960s. Jerry Weist's *Squa Tront* was the Mercedes-Benz of EC fanzines and the pinnacle of not only the 2nd generation of EC zines, but perhaps all fanzines. From the first issue published in 1967, *Squa Tront* had such a level of quality that it stood far above and apart from most other zines. The late Tom Reamy's classic sci-fi zine, *Trumpet* (1965-1974), was already an established zine of high quality that evidenced more than a passing interest in comics, but in comicdom, *Squa Tront* was a world beater. As subsequent issues came out, it became the leviathan of zines. For EC fans, it was a veritable treasure trove, with new and reprinted art by EC artists, unpublished EC strips, cover repros, articles, photos of the EC offices way-back-when, tales of pilgrimages to the homes of Frank Frazetta and Bernard Krigstein, and art by upstarts like Wrightson, Kline, Metzger, Richard Corben and others. As good as it may sound, any given issue of *Squa Tront* must be seen, and HELD, to be fully appreciated. *Squa Tront* may have been one of the first zines to forego cover lettering of any kind—and this includes the title logo—allowing the cover art to be appreciated unfettered. The front and back covers of *Squa Tront* #3 (1969) were full color paintings by Al Feldstein and Reed Crandall, respectively, and the issue had a discernible weight. The fourth issue (1970) had an unprecedented 4 full color covers(!), by Graham Ingles, Kenneth Smith, Vaughn Bode and Harvey Kurtzman.

Besides painting the incredible cover of Graphic Story Magazine #13 (Spring 1971) D. Bruce Berry also illustrated Bill Spicer's adaptation of "Adam Link's Vengeance" by Eando Binder.

Not an editorial went by, however, without Weist beating himself mercilessly for underestimating the costs of producing a fanzine, for being a lousy editor, for being too idealistic, etc. etc., which was always flabbergasting to read in a zine of such unparalleled quality. By issue #5 (1974), Weist remained as publisher but turned the editing duties over to John Benson. By issue #7 (1977), Benson took full control, tightening the package both editorially and graphically, cementing *Squa Tront*'s status as one of the finest fanzines ever published. *Squa Tront* #9 would be the final issue.

A companion EC zine of sorts was Rich Hauser's *Spa Fon*, its first issue preceding *Squa Tront* #1 by about one year. Never

fully achieving the level of quality that *Squa Tront* attained, *Spa Fon* featured comparable material in many regards, including the usual assortment of checklists, articles, and artwork by Frazetta, Crandall, Wrightson, Kaluta, et al. In 1969, *Spa Fon* #5 was an impressive effort with a color Frazetta cover and 88 pages of material, including interviews with Jim Steranko and Bill Gaines. (Steranko had little, if anything, to do with EC, but no one complained.) The only drawback to *Spa Fon* was its tendency to publish amateur fiction and poetry, straying even further from its supposed editorial focus. A sixth issue was in the works but never materialized.

Squa Tront and *Spa Fon* aside, Tom Veilleux's *EC Fan-Addict* (1967-1969) was an endearing, lower tier effort. The first issue was a mimeograph production, with articles about *MAD* and the death of EC's horror titles by William J. Parente and Gordon Flagg, Jr. Though never exceeding 16-pages in length, the second and third issues were probably the heftiest numbers, with offset printing and articles by Parente, Flagg, Tony Isabella, Jerry Weist, and Veilleux himself. Feeling its original title was "too corny," Veilleux retitled the zine *Seraphim* with its 4th issue (1969). (Though *Seraphim* was a fine title for a zine, the "corny" title was part of its charm.) Like Weist and Hauser, Veilleux managed to secure art by Wrightson, Crandall, Roy Krenkel, Kenneth Smith, Jeff Jones, Basil Wolverton and others, but it was not of the same caliber. Issues #4 and 5, in fact, were dominated by pro artwork, with issue #5 (1970; the largest issue at 32 pages) featured only one article (reprinting Parente's *MAD* article from #1) and the remaining pages were given over to portfolios by Krenkel, Smith and Wrightson. This shift from fanzine to so-called prozine would prove to be a trend that some felt diverted dollars from the more genuine fan efforts. It was also emblematic of a brand of fanzine that sacrificed textual content in favor of art folios. Though pretty to look at, they offered none of the stimulating reading that defined the early zines, and lacked the spirit of sharing and inter-fan communication that was so vital to the enjoyment and growth of the hobby.

John Fantuccio shows a flair for horror... and humor on the cover of The Collector #19 (May 1970, published by Bill Wilson).

The ultimate manifestation of this approach to fanzine publishing was the "treasury" edition, one-shot zines that collected the work of a single artist, usually accompanied by an interview and/or a checklist. Examples include *The Robert Kline Portfolio* (1972), *The Berni Wrightson Treasury* (1975), *The Brunner Mystique* (1976) and *The Brothers Hildebrandt.* The latter edition, published "in honor" of a 1978 exhibition, bordered on being a fine art book.

In Defense Of Prozines

As print runs neared 5,000 copies in some cases, prozines were undeniably popular, but there were many who bemoaned the onslaught of the prozine and eulogized the innocent, hand-collated fanzine as the child caught in the crossfire. Rob Gluckson, who published *Gutts, The Magazine With Internal Fortitude* (and later *Graphic Illusions*) with his brother Jeff in the late '60s/early '70s, is quoted in Schelly's book as saying that "as we got more professional, we used less and less of our own work. Who wanted to read articles by fifteen-year-olds when they could read the words of creators they admired? It took a lot of the fun out of producing zines."

True, perhaps, for the Gluckson brothers, but not for the fans. Objectively speaking, the advent of prozines was inevitable, the next logical next stage of development and the natural result of fans and professionals coming closer together. If certain zines seemed long on style and short on substance, it was the laziness of certain editors that compelled them to eschew written content in favor of professional and semi-professional artwork. *Squa Tront* alone was evidence enough that a zine could combine the best elements of the original fanzines with those of the art-dominated prozines to achieve a fully realized hybrid. Martin Greim's *Comic Crusader* and Bill Wilson's *The Collector* (both beginning in the late '60s and continuing through the early '70s) consistently achieved that essential balance between art and article, fan work and pro material. The articles were a mixture of interviews with pros and studies of comic characters both popular and obscure. Fan writers such as Bill Cantey, Tom Fagan and Raymond Miller were regular contributors, along with fan artists like Dennis Fujitake, Don Newton, John Fantucchio, Robert Kline and Bill Black. The distinction between fan art and pro began to blur when fan artists of obvious pro caliber began to emerge. It was clearly only a matter of time before such bright lights as Wrightson, Kaluta, Newton and Kline would graduate to the pro ranks. Not only were they vastly superior to most of the other fan artists, they were superior to many of the established pros, as well.

By contrast, the earlier issues of *Alter Ego* are fascinating, fun and nostalgic, but they were a product of fandom in its infancy. As fandom and fanzines grew up, the zine's explorations into the world of professional comics became more probing and insightful. John Benson's interview with a surprisingly strident Gil Kane in *Alter Ego* #10 (1969) filtered a fan's devotion to comics through the sharply focused lens of academia. It was this brand of intelligent regard and analysis that informed zines like *Squa Tront* under Weist and Benson and Bill Spicer's *Graphic Story Magazine*. They were a cut above

without being pretentious or condescending because they were inspired by the same passion for the medium that fired the very first zines into existence. In truth, the fanzines of old didn't really disappear; they simply continued to grow and mature along with the fans who were producing and reading them.

In addition to the EC zines and the others I've already mentioned, there were many fanzines and prozines that carved equal slots for themselves in the history of fandom. In estimating the number of zines that were published, Schelly referred to a list compiled by John and Tom McGeehan, who had maintained a decade-long practice of purchasing every fanzine that was published. By October 1971, "McGeehan had a list of 631 various fanzine titles, with a total of 2,720 different issues among them. Of this total, which included fanzines devoted to Edgar Rich Burroughs, Robert E. Howard and movie serials, at least 2,000 were comic-oriented."

The Comic Reader enjoyed long, if sporadic, runs under a variety of editors, including Glen Johnson, Derrill Rothermich, *Gosh Wow!* editor/publisher Robert Schoenfeld, Mark Hanerfeld, Paul Levitz (currently Executive VP and Publisher of DC Comics, Inc.), and Jerome Sinkovec. *TCR* was like Marvel's Bullpen Bulletins and DC's Direct Currents columns, but with a lot more detail and a lot less hyperbole. For many years, it was the primary source of mainstream comics news and, depending upon the editorship, featured articles, interviews, cover reproductions, newspaper strips, etc. Though not as glamorous or fancy as many of the classic zines, *TCR* was an important fixture in the lives of many fans.

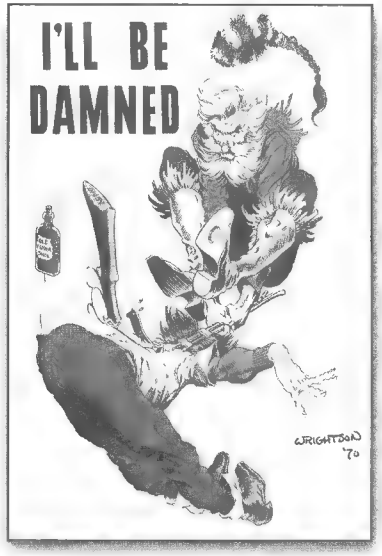
Gary Groth's *Fantastic Fanzine* ran for 13 issues, and while early issues were described by Schelly as being "much like any other mediocre Marvel zine," later issues offered a meaty read and were a sign of things to come in terms of what he would come to achieve in fandom and in professional publishing with *The Comics Journal* and Fantagraphics Books.

Infinity and *Reality* were typical of fanzines published in the early '70s, building their reputations on the acquisition of unpublished pro artwork. Lasting only two issues, *Reality* was the better of the two in terms of layout and content. Both issues relied heavily on material originally intended for the unpublished issues of *Web Of Horror*, so much so that editor Robert Gerstenhaber had the good humor to open his editorial with "Welcome to the second issue of Web of Hor, err...*Reality*." (*Web Of Horror* lasted only three issues [December 1969 and April 1970], and was similar to, and in many ways, superior to *Creepy* and *Eerie*.) Again, some criticized the absence of fan material, but I, for one, was a big fan of *Web Of Horror* and was happy to see this material finally published.

Infinity, on the other hand, wasn't quite as focused, though it exhibited a greater balance of art and text. Despite the professional artwork, *Infinity* remained, at its core, a fanzine. *Infinity* #1 was a rather ragged affair, with poor typing, bad layout and artwork that pros pulled from sketchbooks and wastebaskets. By the second issue, however, they'd traded their Smith-Corona for typesetting and the general quality of the artwork had markedly improved. Over the next five issues, *Infinity* featured more full-page art than strips and published several rather solid articles, but *Infinity* was mainly about interviews, the tone of which painfully revealed the ages of the teenage interviewers. During an interview with Jeff Jones in *Infinity* #3, Jones mentions N.C. Wyeth, and the interviewer says, "So you're familiar with N.C. Wyeth?" Jones politely replies, "Yes, I am," and is then asked, "Did you enjoy the '70 Comic Convention of New York?" Not exactly the stuff of *Graphic Story Magazine*, but interesting nonetheless, and even more so today for its historical value. *Infinity* was edited and published by Gary Berman and Adam Malin, who are the founders of Creation Entertainment and today organize most of the nation's Star Trek and X-Files conventions.

Mark Feldman's *I'll Be Damned* #1 (1970) was everything *Infinity* #1 had aimed to be, the only difference being that Feldman managed to pull it off with a thick, quality zine. Art by and interviews with the usual suspects filled most of the issue, with the additional inclusion of John Severin and Tom Sutton, two of comicdom's most underrated practitioners. Though printed in black-&-white, Feldman managed the incredible coup of securing a cover painting by Frank Frazetta. *I'll Be Damned* #1 also had the unusual and unfortunate distinction of having legal pad-style binding, resulting in the covers coming loose or completely apart from the book after repeated readings. Reduced to 16-pages, the second issue shifted its focus entirely to serialized strips, not the best idea when fanzines were lucky to appear once every 4-6 months, if not annually. High points were the first chapter of Tom Sutton's "Pilgrim" and a 4-page homage to EC by Wrightson. The third and final issue continued in this format, while also publishing Wrightson's unpublished cover story from *Web Of Horror* #4. Feldman followed *I'll Be Damned* with a single issue of *Scream Door* (1971), publishing *Web Of Horror* stories by Sutton and Kaluta, and the never-before-seen cover for *Web* #4 by Wrightson. (In retrospect, it would have been nice if someone had simply published the whole of *Web Of Horror* in a single volume.)

Phase #1 (1971) and the double volume *Heritage* #1 (1972) were the very definition of prozines. Both lasted only *(Continued on page 78)*



Martin Greim featured an Al Williamson sci-fi classic on the cover of his perennial fanzine, the Comic Crusader (#11).

A Berni Wrightson "coonskin confrontation" adorns the cover of I'll Be Damned #3 (Jan 1970).

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CBM

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Continued from page 9

notch. The Schaffenberger interview shed light on an unsung legend. I loved the format of The Strange Lives of Jimmy & Lois with the encapsulated highlights of key issues. The Harvey article brought attention to a great bunch of 'fun' books with Sad Sack being a favorite of mine as a young reader. I don't find many early issues at all in my area. The topper to this issue was the back cover preview tease for Planet Comics.

After finishing this issue, I went through my CBM back issues to #3 of the first series (I missed the first two) to see just how far you've come. Granted, early issues were not of the current quality but they had some good highlights. The first run ended with some great issues (#19, 20, 21) with Enemy Ace, Hanna-Barbera, and the Kirby monsters.

The transition to the Overstreet Quarterly publications (#1-6) really laid the seeds for the quality of the current run. I missed the first two issues of late '93, but the four issues of '94 had some of the best reading to date.

On the issue of publishing reprint material, it is obvious that one 'best of CBM' issue would not be adequate. Along with articles from the first incarnation and the quarterlies, the following would be a must for reprint material: #25 with Phantom Lady and collector poll of favorite covers, #29 Harvey Horror and Halloween is, #32 with Murphy Anderson/Hawkman, #37 with '50's sci-fi, and #42 Genius of Joe Kubert. Thanks.

Chris Winiger, Washington

Does #76 exist?

I am writing concerning Nolan's Notebook in issues #60 and 61, about the collection of Western comics. I for one love to collect Western comics, especially the books with photo covers.

I have a copy of Wild Bill Hickock and Jingles #75. In Overstreet #22, they didn't know if #75 and 76 existed. I wrote and told them I have issue #75 in my collection and I sent them a photocopy of the cover, which they wrote back and thanked me for. Now, does #76 exist?

I did find Bill Black's Golden Age Greats Vol. 11, to be very informative and interesting to any Western collector. By the way, Dell did publish a one shot, "Tombstone Territory" in their Four Color series #1123.

I look forward to receiving your magazine every month, but so far I don't see a Western cover, up to issue #64 at least.

John E. Butt, Newfoundland, Canada

Ra's Al Ghul & Jonah Hex info

Thought you and your readers might be interested in these few items. Detective #411, which predates Batman #232 by one month, features the first appearance of Talia, Ra's Al Ghul's daughter. As you know Talia gave birth to Batman's son in Son of the Demon. The character of Ra's Al Ghul is also first introduced in this book as well as the meaning of his name (it means Demon's head in Arabic). For those Jonah Hex fans who are interested, Jonah appears in J.L.A. #159-160 in what I believe is his only appearance outside his own title (Enemy Ace, Viking Prince, Miss Liberty, and Black Pirate also appear in these two issues). Also, in issue #106 of Brave & Bold, the surprise guest not seen on the cover is Two Face. This issue includes a brief retelling of the origin of Two Face.

George Heilig, via E-mail

The power/scent of nostalgia

Was not aware of your magazine, the CBM, until the proprietor of a comics specialty store, showed me #62. The cover, Fighting American, instantly reminded me of the Captain America comic book of the 1940s.

Inside CBM #62 was a wealth of interesting information. I was pleased that you could feature many of the Golden Age comic covers in colour. The power/scent of nostalgia is overwhelming. I am surprised at the services available for Golden Age comics—in particular Art Restoration, Comic Book Auctions, and Property Insurance. Comics as a serious form of investment have come a long way since I started read-

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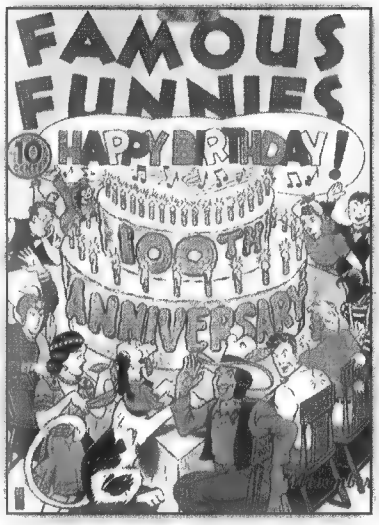

ing them. And the prices sought for Golden Age comics are astonishing in light of the fragile nature of the items. I don't think I will ever be in the position financially to buy an original. Nevertheless, I do hope that hard cover reprints of Golden Age comics proliferate. It will be the only way for most to appreciate these rare gems.

I found the Joe Simon interview fascinating. I learned more about the Simon-Kirby artistic relationship. Also the article on comic book restoration was particularly interesting. Should we really do it? As things get older they deteriorate whether we like it or not. Shouldn't we just accept the fact, not be so fussy, put the money to better use, and get the most of what we can out of life? I have about 300 Bronze Age comics in easy access storage. None of them are in near mint condition, all have their faults (e.g. weak spine, creased cover, cellotape etc.) but I still get immense satisfaction going over them again and again. The best I can do in regards to preservation is keeping them in a dark, cool place. And my comics haven't deteriorated in 15 years in my possession.

The Market Reports are informative. Clearly they give collectors a better guide to the value of their comics than Overstreet. I am surprised people can make a living from comic book collectibles.

The article on pre-Code Atlas creatures was a delight. The covers for these horror books were always great and memorable. You could not help but be enticed to buy the comic book. The cover on p.20 of CBM #62 is a classic example. That's why I think EC Comics were a success in the 1950s—their covers were always provoking, demanding your attention—you could not leave the newsstand without thinking about them.

All in all, CBM #62 was worth the price. I hope the magazine has a long, long, run. Whatever you do, please continue with the glossy paper!

Kon Calembakis, Australia

Famous Funnies #100

Riddle me this… When is a comic book that is neither a #1 issue or contains the first appearance of a major character (or characters) a key first issue in its own right…? When that particular comic book is Famous Funnies #100, that's when! Though comprised entirely of newspaper reprints, Famous Funnies #100 (Eastern Color, November, 1942) is a true comic book milestone in that it is the very first 100th anniversary comic book issue ever. That includes not only the Golden Age, but the Platinum Age of comics from 1897 to 1932 as well. Famous Funnies #100 also features:

- A full-ensemble "Birthday Cake" cover (in the cover style of All-Star Comics #3) which features eleven of the major Famous Funnies characters together on a cover for the first time.
- A rare Buck Rogers cover appearance.
- Three-paragraph announcement in the "Let's Get Into A Huddle" forum page heralding the 100-issue milestone. Eastern Color was well aware of the historic significance of their Famous Funnies series being the very first comic book to achieve the 100-issue mark, and took great pride in documenting the unprecedented event on page 7.
- "100th Anniversary Issue" was printed in bright red ink at the top center of each interior page to ballyhoo Eastern Colors' novel achievement.

The book is listed incorrectly in The Overstreet Comic Book Hall Of Fame as published in October of 1941. Famous Funnies #100 was released in October of 1942 (the cover shows November), not 1941 as shown.

No extra information is given on Famous Funnies #100 on page 418 of the current 28th edition of The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide, and I feel the book is very underpriced at $65 for all the history and precedent that it represents. Fandom must be informed… historic comics such as Famous Funnies #100 should be brought to the attention of fandom! Take note, all, and let the word go forth…

John Mlachnick, Minnesota

Worth the wait

Re: issue #63. Simply wonderful. Best issue of the run. Worth the price, worth the wait, and worth re-reading, over and over and over.

Sid Friedfertig, New York

Understandable, if vexatious

Read the interviews with Stan Lee and Joe Simon in CBM #61 and #62 respectively, and in the larger sense they bring up the old

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bugaboo of us comics fans, who did what in the seminal issues of important comic books.

Kirby claimed in interviews that The Fantastic Four was something he brought to Marvel; Lee said that his boss, Martin Goodman, had been playing golf with Jack Leibowitz who told him that DC was successful with Justice League of America, so Martin came back and told Stan to get on the ball and create a superhero team which ultimately began The Fantastic Four. Earlier in the interview Stan said that he had always been a fan of Human Torch and Sub-Mariner, et al, so I wonder: If DC was successful with their superhero revivals, then why not just then revive Sub-Mariner, Human Torch, Captain America and Bucky and call them The Fantastic Four? Actually, it's probably simple: a half dozen years earlier those characters had been revived for a short time and were canceled, right before the Silver Age began with the revival of The Flash at DC.

(I'm also wondering, as a digression: If Jack Leibowitz inadvertently led to the creation of The Fantastic Four, then did that remark ultimately lead to his own company's demise as the 800-pound gorilla of comic book row? Just a thought.)

Still, I have to wonder if the thought of once again reviving those Timely characters crossed Stan Lee's mind if his version of the creation of The Fantastic Four is correct. I wasn't there—I don't have a Wayback Machine to check on the veracity of anyone's memory—but I have my own memories as a fan. I bought Fantastic Four #1 off the stands and can tell you that I thought it was a loser. It looked very odd. It was not a superhero book nor a monster book, which were on the stands at the time from Kirby and Lee (and which us wise ass junior high kids thought were so bad that they were good). The first issue of The Fantastic Four didn't have the feel of anything that would continue as a series, much less become as legendary as it did, or I would have bought all of the copies on the drugstore spinner and right now I could be retired.

I remembered Jack and his terrific work on Challengers of the Unknown from a few years earlier, which had a very strong concept, and as far as I can tell sprang full blown from someone's head, since the origin story was as strong as subsequent stories. On the other hand, The Fantastic Four looked cobbled together, like they didn't know what they wanted with that first issue, a superhero book or a monster book. Also, even to my immature mind (then and now), the names of the characters seemed weak (Mr. Fantastic?) And that dialogue... whew ("And I'll call myself... Mister Fantastic!!").

I feel that the first issue of The Fantastic Four would have to have been some sort of throw-away, without much thought of the kind of cosmic turn it would take which would ultimately propel it into the reader's hearts. I see both Kirby and Lee's hand in it of course, but mostly I see a whole lot of the "Let's get this thing out!" like they were racing to beat the printer's deadline.

I like Will Murray's scholarly writing, and I like the questions he asked Joe Simon, but the old memory bugaboo pops up again.

Let's see: The Silver Spider became The Fly, but they gave the original unpublished Silver Spider story to Ditko when he did the first Spider-Man. Ditko recognized it as The Fly.

Does this mean that they had originally planned to copy from themselves, much as The Fly origin was a virtual copy of the origin of Captain Marvel? As usual, some of these answers to questions lead to more questions. I'm guessing that these were busy guys at the time, Lee, Kirby, and even Simon, bashing things out to earn a living, without considering that they would be having to answer questions about work they had done 40, 50, or even 60 years before! So faulty memories are understandable, if vexatious. It's interesting to look at things in context,

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and based on the history of the individual creators try to figure out what could have really happened.

Par Holman, Utah

Gentleman of the old school

Just went through the six succulent CBMs I received at my request, and I must send (once more) my sincere congratulations and applause for such a superb magazine devoted to the matter we old-time fans love so much! For a brief resume, let me praise, in #55, all the articles about the Red Cheese and his relatives, wonderfully scripted by Kary, Calhoun and Wright. I had the privilege of exchanging some letters with the late C.C. Beck, a gentleman of the old school indeed, and I keep a warm memory of our brief postal relationship. Besides, I used to prefer the Cap over Super when I read their adventures in my childhood.... The rest of the magazine was equally enjoyable, with the Michelle Nolan column as interesting as usual. CBM #56 was also O.K., even if I don't care much for Mr. Adams style (sorry, legion of N.A. fans!), for I think it's just the opposite of which could be properly called Solid Comic Stuff... Adams, in my humble opinion, denaturalized the purity of comics. Some would call it "slick"; I prefer the other thing. A question of tastes... I enjoyed the Curt Swan pieces in CBM #57, but the strong point for me was the Fiction House Pulps article, by Christian Berger. The color covers were a beauty. CBM #58 was special, among other things because it carried my letter in the mail section; besides, the Mort Weisinger articles were extraordinary. Congratulations to all writers involved. I'm an admirer of Roy Thomas's work; it was interesting to read such a sincere reminiscence from his early days in the comic scene. Pat Calhoun and Michelle Nolan, interesting as ever. A special applause for the Reed Crandall dedicated articles in CBM #60 (couldn't get #59, for it was sold out!!). He truly was a giant of the field; I learned to worship him since I met his unique art in the issues of "Valor" and "Corsario" (Mexican versions of "Valor" and "Piracy") which I found in the middle '50s. Years later, I got to know the rest of his superb work, both in E. C. and Quality, and I admired him even more. Much regretted was the illness that plagued his last years, but his art will remain forever, and the Gemstone reprints (which I eagerly collect) are great help indeed. Finally, in CBM #61, the articles on Stan Lee were pure delight. A first-class magazine you got there! Keep up the good work... I'll try to get all the issues that come out. Best,

Carlos M. Federici, Montevideo, Uruguay

Better every year

Wish there were more magazines available like yours. Keep up the good work. I was at San Diego and thought the panel on restoration was very informative. Gary, you did very well mediating the seminar. I looked for you later on to ask about joining the American Association of Comicbook Collectors. This was my third time in San Diego for the con since 1989. I always have a great time and they keep getting better.

Joseph Serpico, New York

I highly recommend that every serious collector join AACC! For more info, contact Micheal Naiman at (619) 465-2669.

Offended in Missouri

Found the letter from Link Yaco in CBM #62 to be offensive and insulting. The statement "Superman The Israeli Warrior God" is ludicrous and a fraud and totally destroys any universal appeal the character might enjoy. Mr. Yaco may praise his fellow Jewish creators and their inside jokes, but he cannot claim their creations as being "theirs." I'm certain most CBM readers did not heed such a biased history of comics even if most of it was valid. I believe he could have simply asked for the help he wanted without this history. I am a longtime reader of Comic

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Book Marketplace and have enjoyed every issue until this one. I am not aware of Link Yaco's intent in writing what he wrote, but found his letter to be very insensitive to anybody that might hold different views as he expressed. In fact, I found his letter to be quite "Furshluginer!"

Bob Pujol, Missouri

Greatest Art Staff?

Enjoyed the Stan Lee interview that appeared in CBM #61. I grew up reading Marvel superhero comics during the 1960s and retain a nostalgic fondness for most of this stuff, especially Ditko's Spider-Man. Stan's comments that Marvel had, "... the greatest art staff ever assembled in the history of the world," is, I think, wrong. (I hasten to add that Marvel had some top-notch artists working for them, certainly... but also their fair share of not-so-greats over the years.)

No, for the leading contender for Greatest Art Staff Assembled I'd have to vote for the EC New Trend comic books of the early 1950s. For consistently high standards in illustration, I doubt that EC will ever be surpassed. And while I'm on the subject of EC, may I offer a personal reaction to Bill Jenks' Investing in EC feature that ran in CBM #57... It was during the late 1970s that I first discovered EC through the East Coast Comics short-lived reprint series of selected titles. As a result, I became instantly hooked on the output of this remarkable publishing outfit and spent the next few years tracking down original EC comic books, amassing about 100 assorted issues in various conditions. Additionally, I subscribed to Russ Cochran's EC Library series and also bought original New Trend artwork, via auction, throughout the 1980s. To say that I had become an EC addict would be an understatement! I still am. To my mind, Cochran's hardback reprints far surpassed the original comic book printings for two major reasons: 1. These were durable reprints designed for a lifetime of re-reading (unlike the limited life span comics). 2. In all but a few instances, reproduction was directly from the original artwork—at a larger size than the comics—and fidelity was first class; far superior to the small scale comic books which could not do full justice to the quality of the original art.

A far more spectacular type of reprinting than, say, the DC Archives editions that Mr. Jenks brings into the equation as a comparison.... Added to the hardbacks, we have plentiful supplies of comic book format reprints available at affordable prices for old and new fans alike.

So, as a result of all this activity, I began to release my 100 or so original comic books. I had no need for them. If I wanted to re-read anything, I would go to a reprint edition. If I wanted to savour the amazing standard of illustration, the hardback EC Library editions provided images far closer to the beauty of the original art than the comic books could ever give us.

Therefore, yes, I do go along with the theory that the various EC reprint editions have adversely affected the collectibility of the original 1950's comic book. They certainly affected my own collecting habits! For me, ECs are to be read and enjoyed. I guess that if you possess a valuable top condition comic book then you have to carefully envelop it in a Mylar sleeve, store it under archival conditions and shift your focus onto preservation concerns. You certainly don't read it!

Live long and prosper

Terry Doyle, Runcorn, England

Overstreet Update?

Just a quick note to say thanks for a wonderful publication and to ask when we can expect another to see another Price Guide update?

Not only was the last one great as a quick and handy reference, but I seem to have misplaced my copy as well. Thanks again and until the voluminous Volstagg doth join Jenny Craig, "Make Mine CBM!"

Dave Montoya, via E-mail

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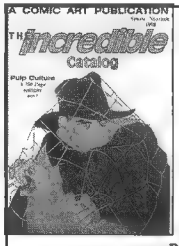

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The next update (called "The Guide") is due out any time now. You can order one from your local comic shop proprietor. My order is already in!

Memories of Siegel & Superman

Regarding your issue on Superman (CBM #63), I'd like to share a nostalgic memory I have regarding the Man of Steel's creator, Jerry Siegel. I began reading and subscribing to the Superman family of comics as a ten-year old in 1964. I'm proud to say I still have all of my originals, subscription creases and all (as comics used to be mailed folded in half).

By 1981, I was beginning a career writing and producing corporate videos, but never lost my affinity for reading and collecting comics. It was at this time that I had the notion of writing Jerry Siegel, c/o DC Comics, to ask him if he would consider authorizing me to write his (and Joe Shuster's) memoirs of the Superman saga, from rags to riches to rags to riches, so to speak.

A few weeks after I mailed my letter, I was pleasantly surprised to receive a reply from Mr. Siegel. He thanked me for my interest in his career, but backed off any commitment to me, explaining that both he and his wife, Joanne were in the process of writing their personal autobiographies. Jerry made it clear in his letter that he did not plan to "stir up all those old miseries" of his and Joe's legal travails with DC in his book.

Alas, in the ensuing years, no such books have been published by either Jerry or Joanne. While I'm sorry I never had the opportunity to assist Jerry Siegel in bringing his story to light I'll be forever grateful that he took the time to reply to my letter. I treasure his letter as I do my Superman comics collection.

Jay Raskin, New Jersey

Drucker not Oksner

Nice to see an article on Joe Simon in #62. Back in the sixties, while he was editing SICK magazine as I recall, I wrote him a fan letter—mostly asking about S&K's contribution to THE FLY—and he sent me back a very nice letter and an autographed color print of his creations. That simple act of kindness meant a lot at the time and stayed with me as a very pleasant memory.

While I am no expert on the DC humor books, I would like to add to my friend and correspondent Dave Blanchard's article on Dobie Gillis. The cover of DB #25 (shown in CBM) was, of course, not drawn by Bob Oksner... but by Mort Drucker. It is my understanding that Drucker contributed to a number of the humor books, notably Bob Hope (and probably at least a few Dobies). I've been told that the DC editors were actually averse to assigning him any "serious" work for a while and it took some time for him to get the chance to do the war titles for Robert Kanigher. Perhaps somebody more informed on the subject can contribute more info. Drucker's comic book work was always superb... hard to believe anybody could have ever doubted him!

Best wishes and keep up the good work!

Tony Gleeson, via E-mail

Letter from South Africa

Firstly, thank you for a great magazine—I look forward to it every month. I have been collecting comics since 1965, when a friend told me about an amazing new character he saw called "The Hulk." "The Hulk?" I exclaimed. What a strange name! And, what, he's got green skin? No! Impossible! Show me! That's how I got hooked. Now I collect horror, romance, war, superheroes... in fact, anything I can lay my hands on. Unfortunately, we only have a few comic book stores, and they rarely stock old comics. I normally have to advertise in our local newspaper for people who want to sell their old comics. Thanks again for your invaluable information every month.

Louis de Jager, Pretoria, South Africa

My thanks to everyone who wrote in this month and I look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions. Remember, YOUR OPINION COUNTS! Please note that CBM reserves the right to edit letters selected for publication for length and/or content. If you'd care to write, send communications to:

NOLAN'S CHECKLIST

(Continued from page 19)

- Robotman vs. Robotgirl! (#177, Nov 1951, 6 pgs.)
- The Robot Ghost! (#178, Dec 1951, 3 1/2 pgs.) shortest story
- Robotman Crusoe (#179, Jan 1952, 6 pgs.)
- Displays for Crime! (#180, Feb 1952, 6 pgs.)
- The Safest Safe in the World (#181, Mar 1952, 6 pgs.)
- Robotman's Double! (#182, Apr 1952, 6 pgs.)
- The Wrecking of Robotman! (#183, May 1952, 6 pgs.)
- Robotman Runs a Restaurant! (#184, Jun 1952, 6 pgs.)
- The Three Impostors! (#185, Jul 1952, 5 1/2 pgs.)
- The Man Who Read Robotman's Mind! (#186, Aug 1952, 6 pgs)
- The Man Who Insured Robotman! (#187, Sep 1952, 6 pgs.)
- Robotman Becomes a Robot! (#188, Oct 1952, 6 pgs.)
- Golden Robot! (#189, Nov 1952, 6 pgs.)
- Robotman's Robot! (#190, Dec 1952, 6 pgs.)
- The Specter of Robotman (#191, Jan 1953, 6 pgs)
- Robotman-Servant for a Day (#192, Feb 1953, 6 pgs.)
- The Super Magnet! (#193, Mar 1953, 6 pgs.)
- Crime Collector (#194, Apr 1953, 6 pgs.)
- Robotman-Guided Missile (#195, May 1953, 6 pgs.)
- The Repeating Robotman! (#196, Jun 1953, 6 pgs.)
- License for a Robot! (#197, Jul 1953, 6 pgs.)
- Robotman... On the Loose! (#198, Aug 1953, 6 pgs.)
- The Robber Robot! (#199, Sep 1953, 6 pgs.)
- Superstitious Robot! (#200, Oct 1953, 6 pgs.)
- Safety-first Robot! (#201, Nov 1953, 6 pgs.)
- The Human War Machine! (#202, Dec 1953, 6 pgs) last story

NOTE 1: After Detective #202, Captain Compass replaced Robotman and Mysto the Magician replaced Pow-Wow Smith (Pow-Wow Smith was moved to Western Comics).
NOTE 2: All Robotman stories in Detective were 6 pages in length except issue #178 (3 1/2 pages) and issue #185 (5 1/2 pgs).
NOTE 3: Detective #155 (Jan 1950) contained no Robotman story.

Fantastic Fanzines!

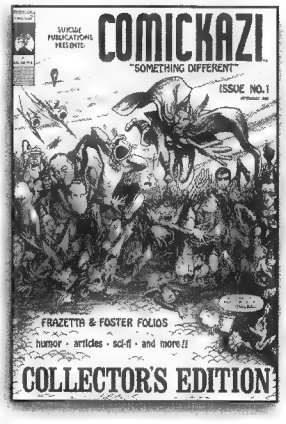
(Continued from page 71) one issue, but *Phase* (edited by Sal Quartuccio and published by John Carbonaro, who would later go on to publish numerous issues of *Hot Stuf'*, a prototype of the independent comics to come) was an anthology without any particular focus but redeemed by solid work by Brunner, Ken Barr, Neal Adams, Kaluta, Jeff Jones, Gray Morrow and others. *Heritage* was the result of a certain fascination comicdom held, at least at that time, with Flash Gordon. Perhaps touching a nerve in many of its contributors, the quality of the work is beyond compare. Strips both straight and satirical by Brunner, Kaluta, Jeff Jones, Bruce Jones and Reed Crandall were phenomenal, and illustrations by Wally Wood, Wrightson, Al Williamson, Adams, Kenneth Smith and Morrow were equally inspired. Produced by Doug Murray, Richard Garrison and Bruce Hershenson, *Heritage* was clearly a labor of love by genuine fans of both comics and Flash Gordon. Despite articles by Larry Ivie and Alan Asherman about the strip and the serials and an interview with Buster Crabbe, its status as a fanzine/prozine is debatable.

Imagination (1971) was an interesting one-shot that looked promising, featuring a Gray Morrow cover and strips by Adams, Wrightson, Jones, Kaluta, Morrow, and a very talented fan artist named Bill Stillwell, with a smattering of uncredited fiction and poetry. Editor/publisher David Jablin promised "amazing" things in future issues and offered subscriptions, but no further issues materialized.

Comickazi was a unique and entertaining zine that followed few of the established formats. Robert S. Napier and fan artist Bob Juanillo clearly set out to produce a zine that was as jocular as it was informative. In addition to straight-ahead features about Hal Foster, Frazetta, and paperback cover artist James Bama, Napier and Juanillo collaborated on various bits of humor, the best of which was "How to Produce a Fanzine," illustrated with panels clipped from *Creepy* and *Eerie*. With a knack for adapting to any subject matter, Bob Juanillo was a gifted artist with a style of drawing wholly his own. Juanillo, unfortunately, fell victim to a flu-like illness before the promised second issue could be published, and before he could make a lasting mark in a field to which he was dearly devoted.

Jan Strnad's published Robert Kline's best early work in Anomaly (#2, 1970, BELOW). The exposure eventually brought Kline to prominence.

Bob Juanillo created a showcase piece for the cover of the unique one-shot, Comickazi #1 (Sep 1969).



Fanzines—Underground Comix

A personal favorite of mine was Jan Strnad's *Anomaly*. "Straddling several fandoms," as Strnad explains in his editorial, *Anomaly* "is definitely science fiction and sword & sorcery oriented, and yet the graphics of comics fandom are evidently in profusion." The first issue was built largely around the work of Robert Kline, whose style was tight and professional yet imbued with bursts of fannish zeal. Kline was a better illustrator than comic book artist, and *Anomaly* feature plenty of his full page drawings, as well. Strnad would eventually move on to write professional comics (*Sword Of The Atom, Mutant World, Gen 13,* etc.), and *Anomaly* afforded him a place to publish his own work, particularly his multi-part science fiction serial, "Survivors of the Suicide World." *Anomaly* #1 also featured a short piece by Harlan Ellison, a centerspread by Reed Crandall, art by Hickman and Smith, and a profile of writer/editor Archie Goodwin by Jerry Weist. The production values were especially attractive, and Strnad's maiden effort was simply a pleasure to behold; still is.

Anomaly #2 (1970) was a bit longer, with a dynamite cover, portfolio and strip by Kline, a Masked Lizard strip by Bode, fiction by Strnad and Stanley S. Waiter, and art by Richard Corben. Kline soon after withdrew from active fandom to further his talents and devote himself largely to the field of animation, but he had a strong presence in *Anomaly* #3 (1971), nonetheless, as Strnad introduced readers to the artist himself in an excellent profile, the only text piece in an issue otherwise devoted to art and strips. In Kline's stead, Corben stepped in with a solid wrap-around cover (black-&-white), a beautiful interior color piece (which really should have been the cover), and the art for the 3rd chapter of Strnad's serial, now done as comics. A portfolio by Roy Krenkel is never a bad thing, but artwork by Corben protégé Herb Arnold left a bit to be desired, and a strip by Kenneth Smith showed that his style was best-suited for illustrations and paintings.

As Strnad had hinted in his 3rd issue editorial, *Anomaly* #4 (1972) was published as an underground comic by comix/fanzine dealer Bud Plant, featuring a revised version of the Strnad/Corben story in #3 (retitled "Encounter at War"), and a Strnad-scripted strip by Kline (perhaps his best). The most underground-like story was a third strip by Corben called "Alice in Wonderlust." Beyond that, rather than indulge in the usual sex & drugs antics typical of the undergrounds, Strnad used the form to tell whimsical and dynamic tales of fantasy and science fiction, albeit with elements that mainstream comics would have frowned upon.

Anomaly was far from the only title to make the quasi-pro leap into underground comix. In addition to the comix reprinting George Metzger's early fanzine work and providing a springboard for new material, other zines found a new and different audience in the undergrounds. Dennis Cunningham's *Weirdom Illustrated* became *Weirdom Comix* (1971-72). Except for the saving grace of early artwork by Richard Corben, *Weirdom Comix* was a particularly weak title, but at the time, even mediocre undergrounds were a welcome sight. A high-

light, however, was Corben's *Tales From The Plague* (1971), reprinted by Cunningham from *Weirdom* #13 (1969), the final fanzine issue. Despite being Corben's first published work of length, it stands, even today, as a raw classic of incredible vision and horrific imagination. The underground reprints the art larger than it appeared in the fanzine version and warrants seeking out. *Tales* was again published in a fanzine-like format in 1986 by Bill Leach, Cunningham's former business partner, longtime fan, and experienced zine and comix publisher. With a new cover by Corben and high-grade paper, this 8½x11" edition is perhaps the best of the bunch.

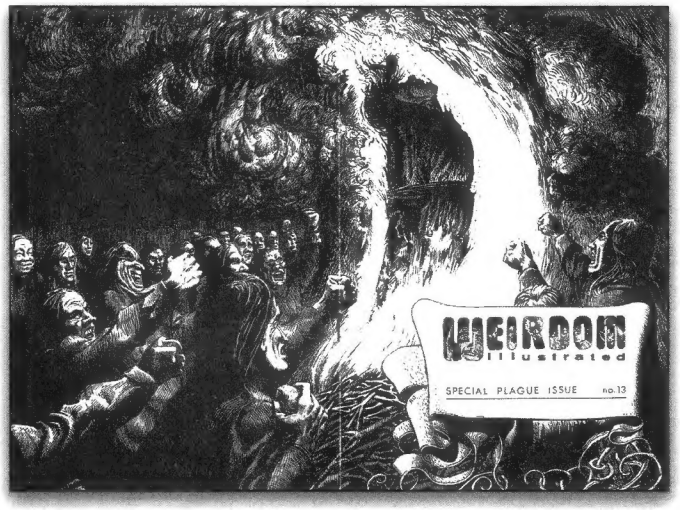
Corben's first venture into the treacherous waters of self-publishing, *Fantagor* (1969) and his now-classic "Rowlf" (originally published in Rudi Franke's *Voice Of Comicdom*) were reprinted as underground comix in 1970 and 1971, respectively. Another three issues of *Fantagor* would follow, with contributions from Metzger, Arnold, Jack Jaxon and others.

Landon Chesney (childhood friend of Robert Overstreet), whose art seemed a combination of Jack Davis, Johnny Craig and Harvey Kurtzman, was perhaps the finest artist to appear during the apex of the strip zines. Despite the professional quality of his work, however, a confessed inability to complete more than a page per week explains why he never made a career of it. One of his best strips, published in *Fantasy Illustrated* #2 (1964), was "The Life Battery," adapting the Eando Binder story. Though a tad dry and lacking in action, the strip was as atmospheric and compelling as anything published in the '50s, drawing a great deal of inspiration from EC and its many imitators. Certain undergrounds were similarly inspired by EC Comics, of which classic titles like *Slow Death* and *Skull Comics* are prime examples. Another such title, *Weird Fantasies* (1972), for which Chesney provided an outstanding EC-style cover, reprinted "The Life Battery" along with a new Corben story.

As fanzines were finding renewed life in the undergrounds, fanzines devoted to undergrounds comix began to crop up, as well. In the mid-seventies, *Cascade Comix Monthly* emerged as a kind of *Comics Reader* for underground fans, and Clay Geerdes' *Comix World* was a long-standing newsletter that functioned in a similar capacity.

Gary Arlington's San Francisco Comic Book Company published the second issue of *All Stars* in 1970. Edited again by Arbunich and Dubay, *All Stars* #2 was an interesting collision of mainstream and underground comix, with an incredible cover by the late Rick Griffin and 68 pages of drawings and strips by old pros like Steve Ditko, Crandall and Williamson, and twisted newcomers like Robert Crumb, Greg Irons and Rory Hayes. More underground than overground, art by Metzger, Moscoso, Gilbert Shelton, Jim Osborne, Rick Shubb, S. Clay Wilson, Kim Deitch, Spain and Larry Welz dominated.

The fanzine most closely linked with the underground movement was *Promethean Enterprises* (1969-74), whose mission was to be a "contributing and uniting force... in comic and underground fandom." Despite the emphasis on underground comix, early issues paid equal tribute to mainstream and European comics. An interesting article in #2 followed the careers of numerous artists during the 1955–1960 (post EC/pre-Marvel) "dark ages" of comics. The whole of #5 was a lengthy and fascinating interview with Crumb, with a "comic book" insert featuring Metzger's "Panoply Mind," and strips by Oisif Eguax, Trina Robbins, Vince Davis and others. *Promethean* was a uniquely Californian production, particularly with its slant toward comix, Griffin's poster art and the like.



Richard Corben's first major work in Weirdom Illustrated #13 (Apr 1969, wrap-around cover shown above) begged the question, "What exactly IS a fan artist anyway?"

The End of an Era

The age of the comic book fanzine ended as quietly as it began. Times had changed, and so had the fans. The charm of amateur zines no longer appealed to fans, and anything professional enough to pass muster was increasingly finding its way onto newsstands. After editing and publishing *The Collector* for many years, Bill G. Wilson ventured into the dark waters of mainstream publishing with *Questar* (1978), a sci-fi zine with a side interest in fantasy and comics. But just as *Monsters & Heroes* was more fanzine than magazine, *Questar* was simply an upscale fanzine that managed to get newsstand distribution.

Other newsstand fan magazines include *Monster Times, Inside Comics,* Steranko's *Comixscene* and others, none of which had the charm or the inherent birthright required to succeed either aesthetically or financially. Good though they may have been, they were products designed to capitalize on what was once a hobby devoid of profit motives. Fandom was growing by leaps and bounds, but fanzines weren't going to grow with it, nor were they going to be transformed into commodities. What worked in fanzines couldn't be applied to magazines.

Like academic journals, fanzines appealed to specific niches of interest. Fanzines were, first and foremost, labors of love and products of passion, and there was no respectful way to slant zines like *Squa Tront* or *Graphic Story Magazine* toward a larger audience. (*Fanfare*, overly broad in its attempts to cover too many forms of popular culture, was evidence enough of that.) The very thought of magazines fashioned after fanzines, irony aside, smacked of

Fantastic Fanzines!

RBCC #74 (1970) advertised the first edition of Overstreet's Comic Book Price Guide and its pre-publication price of $3.50 per copy.

"cashing in," and efforts in this regard generally resulted in watered down imitations and ultimately in a depressing end to a wonderful period in the history of fandom.

By the late '70s, fanzines as we knew them were a dying breed, and by the '80s, the advent of independent publishing and direct sales irrevocably altered the nature of the industry. As Schelly writes toward the end of his book, "the principal of hobbyism (which respected the ideal of non-capitalist endeavor) gave way to capitalism." The realm of fan publishing is almost exclusively professional today, yet for the most part, it remains in the hands of the fans. *The Comics Journal* (*CJ*), *Comics Buyer's Guide* (*CBG*) and *Comic Book Marketplace* (*CBM*) are what remain of what Schelly calls "the Golden Age of fanzines," and they continue in the tradition of article-oriented fanzines.

Still another is *Horror from the Crypt of Fear*, now published by Bill Leach; the first eight issues were published by Sam Kingston before his death at the age of 33. It was Kingston's wish that Leach continue the zine in his stead, leading to the transformation of a sincere but amateur effort into an EC zine worthy of comparison with *Squa Tront*. Like *Blab*, the tenth issue is a digest-sized, 70-page gem bursting with newly commissioned art by such luminaries as Johnny Craig, George Evans, Marie Severin, Al Feldstein, Jack Kamen, Al Williamson, Kelly Freas and Bill Stout, and articles by renowned EC collectors and *CBM* historians like Roger Hill. Parties interesting in obtaining a copy may contact Leach via E-mail (comicart4u @aol .com).

With a print run of less than 500 copies, *Horror from the Crypt of Fear* recalls the earliest days of fandom when fanzines were communiqués between an elite few who cherished comics as a magical medium that would forever hold them under its spell.

Fanzine Marketplace

Though not the hottest of commodities, fanzines are becoming increasingly collectible... and the prices they are fetching reflects this. Fortunately, many zines can still be found for around $10 each, particularly at conventions, but it's not unusual to find prices in the range of $25 to $35 (or more for scarce first numbers) for any given issue of *Alter Ego*, *RBCC*, *Gosh Wow!*, *Reality* and *Infinity*, *Comi-Collector*, *Comic Art*, *Masquerader*, and other early zines... and $35 to $60 for any issue of *Witzend*, *Squa Tront* and *I'll Be Damned*. *Marvel Times* #2 (1972) recently fetched $10 on an Internet auction site, whereas *Squa Tront* #8 (1978) sold for approximately $35. A recent Bud Plant catalog listed *Witzend* #2 at $60. Seller of monster mags and fanzines, Steve Dolnick, currently lists *Witzend* #3 and #4 and unspecified issues of *Voice Of Comicdom* at $20 each. *All Stars* #2 is generally categorized as an underground specialty item and is seldom listed below $50. The good news is that any of the above can often be found for less than stated here, and speculators have yet to inflate the prices beyond reason and, more importantly, beyond the spirit in which the fanzines were originally produced.

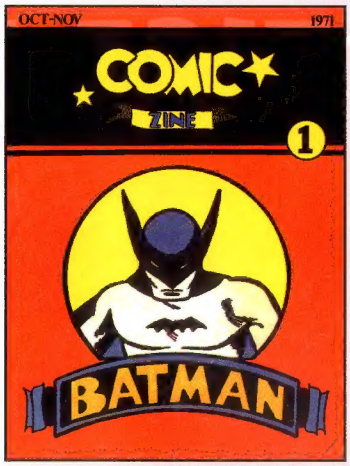
The compulsion to publish lives on, but the fanzines of today dedicate themselves to everything BUT comics, centered, instead, around everything from music and crime to pop culture and sports. The fanzines of the '50s, '60s, and '70s were a manifestation of an unadulterated love of comic books. It wasn't enough to read them and collect them—they had to be written about and shared and given serious scrutiny. Fanzines brought fans together, and the more erudite endeavors lifted comics out of the boxes under kids' beds and helped elevate them to a level of respectability. The comic magazines of today maintain that tradition, but the intensely personal and individually stylized nature of comic fanzines in their halcyon days will never be replaced.

The author's introduction to comic fandom... RBCC #66 (1969). Cover by Robert Kline.

Many thanks to Bill Schelly for the feedback that helped make this a better article, as well as the invaluable archival work he continues to pursue in preserving the history and essence of fandom in its youth. Visit his website at http://members.aol.com/vegasite/hamster.html

Since 1970, Mark Burbey has written for Rocket's Blast and Comicollector (RBCC), Cascade Comix Monthly, Comic Buyer's Guide, The Comics Journal, Amazing Heroes, *and other fanzines. His comics work includes* Street Music, Freaks' Amour *and* Horror Show. *More recently, he has written for* Filmfax, Alternative Press, Magnet, Jazziz, Toy Trader, *and* Baby Boomer Collectibles.

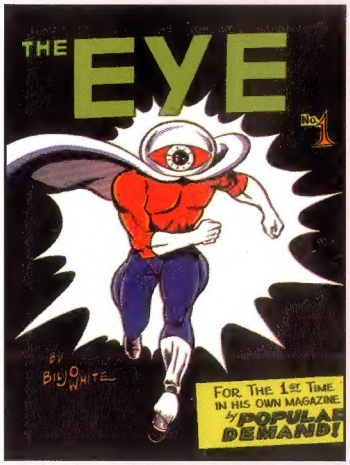
ICC Handbook #3 (1968)



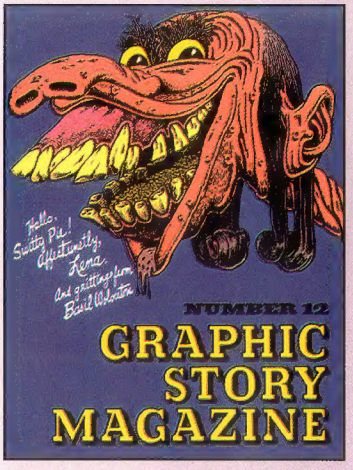
Comic Zine #1 (Oct/Nov 1971)

RBCC #86 (1970?, Berni Wrightson)

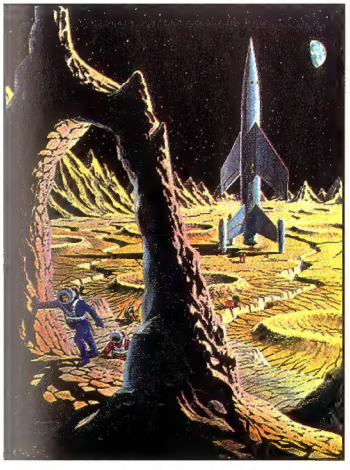
Fantasy Illustrated #6 (Sum/Fall 1966)



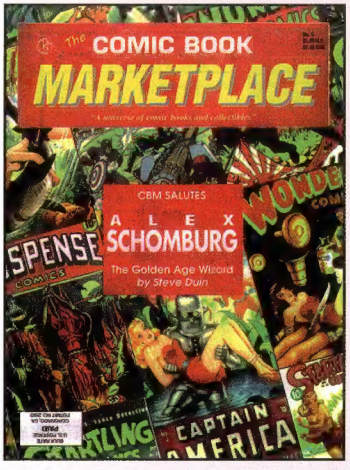
The Eye #1 (1965)



Graphic Story Mag. #12 (Fall 1970)



Squa-Tront #3 (1969, Al Feldstein)



Comic Book Marketplace #5 (Sep 1991)

Golden Age of Comics #6 (Sep 1983)

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